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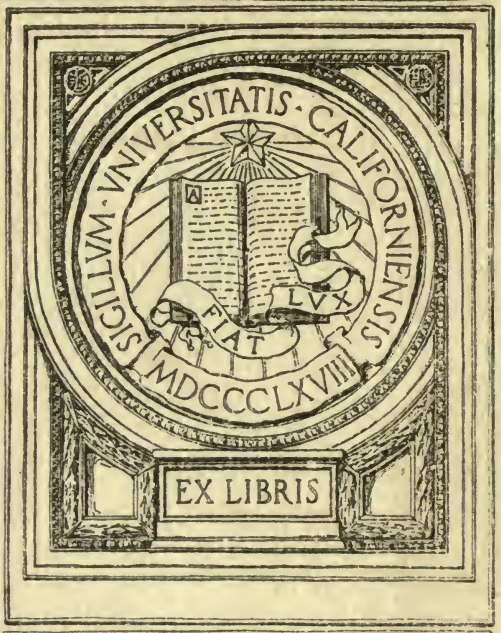

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AT HOME AND ON THE BATTLEFIELD

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W. W. Stephenson

AT HOME AND ON THE BATTLEFIELD

LETTERS FROM THE CRIMEA, CHINA AND EGYPT, 1854–1888

By Sir FREDERICK CHARLES ARTHUR STEPHENSON, G.C.B.
LATE SCOTS GUARDS, COLONEL OF THE COLDSTREAM GUARDS AND CONSTABLE OF THE TOWER OF LONDON

TOGETHER WITH A SHORT MEMOIR OF HIMSELF
OF HIS BROTHER, SIR WILLIAM HENRY STEPHENSON, K.C.B.
AND OF THEIR FATHER, SIR BENJAMIN CHARLES STEPHENSON, G.C.H.

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY
Mrs. FRANK POWNALL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO THE EGYPTIAN LETTERS BY
FIELD-MARSHAL LORD GRENFELL, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

WITH PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1915

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History Sather

TO

GEORGE AND VERA

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INTRODUCTION

THE idea of printing these slight memoirs of my grandfather, my father, and my uncle was originally conceived only for the purpose of preserving the memory of three interesting people for the younger members of their family, to whom otherwise they would be but names. But on reading Sir Frederick Stephenson's letters, these proved to be so attractive that they were added to the scheme, and form the real interest of this volume now offered to the public ; the memoirs only lead up to them and fill up the gaps.

Unluckily, only two of Sir Benjamin Stephenson's letters have been preserved, and their existence was unknown to the family until the publication of the Life of Sir Herbert Taylor. They are now, through the courteous consideration of the author of that book (Mr. Ernest Taylor), in the possession of the family, who are very glad to have these specimens of Sir Benjamin's handwriting and composition, though the letters themselves are of no general interest apart from the narrative in which they are incorporated.

Sir William Stephenson's letters are also very few in number and only of private interest. He was so seldom separated from his family that there was indeed little occasion for correspondence. He wrote frequently to his mother, but few of these letters have been preserved, and those he wrote to his brother to the

Crimea and China, which appear to have been of great interest, must also have been destroyed.

Sir Frederick's letters to his own family were, however, carefully copied into books. There are a good many of the originals as well, but it is particularly unfortunate that the letter written to his brother after the battle of the Alma, apparently from the battlefield, and to which he refers in another letter, was not copied with the rest and is not forthcoming.

The letters are almost all copied in the same hand, that of his eldest sister, Henrietta Maria Stephenson. One letter is in the handwriting of his mother, and two are in that of another sister. For the most part they have been carefully copied, with very occasional omissions, which have now been supplied in brackets. The names both of places and people are variously spelt, so it has been thought best to take a uniform and modern spelling—the picturesque Bala-Klava ("the place of fish") giving way to the conventional Balaclava, as it is written in later letters.

Amongst those written from Egypt I have permission to insert some very interesting letters to Lady Elizabeth Romilly.

The letters extend from 1854 to 1888, covering the most important years of a long life. They open with the first call to active service, and close with the ending of the last military appointment in a foreign country.

In all these letters, whether written from the Crimea, China, or Egypt, the same spirit is predominant. Devotion to duty, self-effacement, and a keen appreciation of the good qualities in others, with an intense interest in his surroundings, both as regards places and people, are always apparent; while the frequent and warm references to home and its delights,

and the expressions of affection towards the various members of his family, show how strong a hold the domestic side of life had on him.

It has often been a matter of surprise that, having this keen appreciation of home life, he should never have married. There are two letters from the Crimea written to two of his sisters which probably give the clue to this.

No man could have been more fitted for a happy married life, and she would have been a fortunate woman who had consented to share it with him; but his profession came first, and he always said that young soldiers should not marry. His reasons for coming to this conclusion were no doubt deduced from the circumstances alluded to in the letters.

It is difficult to realise, while reading these letters, that they were written slowly and with difficulty, but Sir Frederick was never quick with his pen. Many hours of well-earned and much-needed rest must have been sacrificed to enable him to communicate so fully with those he loved at home.

Up to the last he was most careful and punctilious in attending to his correspondence, and in 1910, when past his eighty-ninth birthday, he apologises to Lady Wantage for " neglecting " her, and not writing sooner, saying, " I keep plodding on quietly, peaceably, and happily, though I feel laziness growing upon me with advancing years, which will account for my present neglect."

One very characteristic trait must be noticed—the way in which home thoughts and considerations were inextricably woven amongst the more pressing calls of the moment. There is ever some recollection of a friend or relation, some word to the absent, even a

playful message to a child, at times when most people would be wholly absorbed in their own immediate surroundings and necessities. He was one of those who always have time to think of others.

Of the two sons, Frederick most resembled his father both in appearance and character, and their handwritings bear a remarkable similarity, being in both cases small, neat, and rather stiff. The elder son's handwriting was much larger and bolder, and he wrote freely, while his letters rarely needed any corrections. They were expressed in short sentences of short words. I remember his once saying, " Never use words of two syllables if one will say what you want." Excellent advice, not easy to follow.

All the three were fine-looking, handsome men, highly cultivated, and refined in taste ; and one quality they all possessed in common—the humility of really great minds.

Good oil portraits exist of Sir Benjamin by Bird, and of Sir William by George Richmond, but nothing really adequate of Sir Frederick, only sketches and photographs.

In the Chapel at the Wellington Barracks his name is fitly inscribed on the south of the chancel, by the side of the three-light window, whose intersecting columns are dedicated to his memory.

In the Appendix, for it has no real place in these memoirs, I have included an amusing account of two of Sir Benjamin Stephenson's sisters, written by his youngest surviving daughter, Charlotte Augusta. They were such curious types of a past age that the description of them, if a little unkind (for the writer had a caustic pen), is well worth preserving, and the old ladies are alluded to in the letters. Another item of the Appendix,

written by the same hand, is the story of Mrs. George Coxe. Some people may say that it has no place at all, even there, as neither she nor her husband was a Stephenson ; but George Coxe, Sir Frederick's great-uncle on the mother's side, is also referred to in the letters, and the story is so romantically interesting that it ought to be handed down to future generations.

It only remains for me to express my gratitude to those who have helped me in my labour of love.

Very sincerely do I thank my own family for criticism, encouragement, and information ; Lady Wantage and Lady Jane Lindsay for writing something expressly for the memoir of Sir Frederick Stephenson, and the former for permission to quote from her Life of Lord Wantage, and for giving me access to letters from Sir Frederick ; Colonel Romilly for lending me letters and his own notes, and for giving me valuable hints ; and above all, Lord Grenfell, whose introduction to the Egyptian letters has raised this little book on to a plane it could never have reached unaided.

H. A. P.

October 1914.

THESE letters were already in Mr. Murray's hands for consideration before war was declared on the 4th of August, and it seems imperative that a few words should be added upon a subject in which Sir Frederick Stephenson would have been so deeply interested. He would have been glad to reconstruct his views formed long ago of the friends and foes of Crimean days of whom he said some hard things. Half a century has passed since then and brought many changes. Though the rank and file of the French army were probably as brave and

competent then as they are to-day, they were differently commanded. The generals of the Republic have proved themselves greater, nobler, and more efficient than those of the Second Empire. Those same fifty years have turned our Russian foes into friends, and have also shown us that nation steadily advancing in civilisation and education, and becoming, in more than a political sense, one of the Great Powers. As to the Germans, there was no need for Sir Frederick's opinion to change in that quarter. His dislike and distrust of the Kaiser were profound, and expressed constantly and vehemently. He was convinced that Germany was the enemy of England, and that any expression of goodwill, or a desire for peace, was hypocritical and intended to mislead. He would have followed the fortunes of our splendid sailors and soldiers with deep emotion, and the fact that ten of his great-nephews were engaged in the war, some in the navy and some in both the French and British armies, would have been a source of immense gratification. Two of those great-nephews, grandsons of Captain Giffard of H.M.S. *Tiger*, and of the sister whose "noble conduct" is referred to in the early Crimean letters, have already gained distinction. One has given his life for his country after being mentioned in dispatches and promoted; the other (his twin), who was severely wounded at Mons, is one of the few survivors of the gallant L Battery of R.A., and has, besides promotion, received the Cross of the Légion d'Honneur.

H. A. P.

January 1915.

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION vii

I. JOSEPH STEPHENSON 1

II. SIR BENJAMIN C. STEPHENSON 2

III. SIR WILLIAM H. STEPHENSON 5

IV SIR FREDERICK C. A. STEPHENSON 25

LETTERS FROM THE CRIMEA—

PREFACE 63

THE CRIMEA—1854-1856 65

NOTES 159

LETTERS FROM CHINA—

PREFACE 163

CHINA—1857-1860 165

NOTES 277

LETTERS FROM EGYPT—

PREFACE BY FIELD-MARSHAL LORD GRENFELL . . 281

EGYPT—1883-1887 287

NOTES 359

APPENDIX I. 363

APPENDIX II. 371

INDEX 379

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

SIR WILLIAM H. STEPHENSON, K.C.B. . . . *Frontispiece*

From an oil painting by GEORGE RICHMOND, R.A.

Presented to Lady Stephenson, by members of the Board of the Inland Revenue Department, on the retirement of Sir William H. Stephenson, K.C.B., Chairman of the Board, 1866–1877.

FACING PAGE

SIR BENJAMIN C. STEPHENSON, G.C.H. 1

From an oil painting by J. F. BIRD.

THE CHESTNUTS 20

From a photograph.

SIR FREDERICK C. A. STEPHENSON, G.C.B. . . . 64

From an oil sketch by Lady MUNRO.

THE HAPPY WARRIOR

"WHOSE high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright."

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SIR B. C. STEPHENSON, G.C.H.

(From an oil painting by J. F. Bird)

[*To face p.* 1

AT HOME AND ON THE BATTLEFIELD

I

Joseph Stephenson

The year 1713 is the earliest date that can be positively fixed upon in any account of this family of Stephenson. In that year Joseph Stephenson was born in Cumberland, it is believed in Carlisle. He must have been of good family, being recorded as "armiger" on his tombstone in Kensington Churchyard. He appears to have broken from his relations entirely when he came to London, and nothing is known of them, nor much of his own personal history. There is a family tradition that he ran away from home to come to London, but where that home was, or why he ran away from it, his grandchildren had no idea. The only facts that can be verified are that he became President of the Board of Green Cloth (the forerunner of the Board of Works), and married Jane Clifford, by whom he had three sons and four daughters. He died in 1785 in the apartments he occupied in Kensington Palace. The apartments continued in the occupation of his widow and of his daughters till the death of the last survivor in 1853. None of the daughters married, neither did the youngest son. The eldest son, John, married a daughter of the fifth Viscount Molesworth, and left one son, Ernest, who married Frederica Bevan, but died without issue. The second son, Benjamin Charles, was born in 1766.

Such an excellent account of him was written after his death by his friend Mr. Markland for the *Gentleman's Magazine* that it will be best to quote it in full. It gives all that the present generation know of his life and habits, for his death occurred when his eldest grandchild now surviving was but eight years old, and all the intervening generation are dead.

II

From the "Gentleman's Magazine," September 1839

"*June* 10.—In Bolton Row, Piccadilly, aged 73, Major-General Sir Benjamin Charles Stephenson, G.C.H., one of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests.

"This gentleman entered the Hanoverian Service in May 1788 as Second Lieutenant in the 9th Regiment of Light Dragoons, and in 1796 he joined the English Army as Cornet and Adjutant of the 3rd Dragoon Guards. During the period of his service he was present in the battle of Famars, and at the siege of Valenciennes, besides several other actions and skirmishes, in one of which he was very severely wounded by a shell, and his horse was shot under him.

"In 1803 he was appointed Deputy-Judge Advocate of the South-West District, and two years afterwards Mr. Pitt named him to succeed Colonel Beckwith as a Commissioner for inquiring into the Public Expenditure of the Military Department.

"In 1812 he received from Queen Charlotte the appointment of Master of the King's Household at Windsor, and such was the admirable system introduced by him into that establishment, that, whilst he was in office, there was no one year in which a surplus revenue of some thousand pounds was not returned into the Treasury; and so satisfied was Lord Winchilsea, the then Lord Steward, with his judicious management,

that the control of this branch of his department was wholly relinquished by him to the care of Sir B. Stephenson.

" In 1814 he was gazetted a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Hanoverian Service, and in September of that year he was appointed Surveyor-General of the Board of Works. That Board being subsequently merged in the department of Woods and Forests, Sir. B. Stephenson became one of the Commissioners of the new Board, and continued in that situation up to the period of his decease. He also held the office of Riding Forester of the New Forest, with a salary of £500 a year ; which office (a sinecure) has ceased with his death.

" In 1823 he was requested to undertake the superintendence of the Duke of York's household, in the hope that by the same system of economy and regularity which had been introduced at Windsor, His Royal Highness's affairs might in some measure be rescued from the state of disorder into which they had fallen. For his services in the execution of this last employment he declined accepting any salary.

" In 1830 he was raised to the rank of Major-General in the Hanoverian Service, and created a Knight Commander of the Guelphic Order of Hanover, and in 1834 he received the Grand Cross of the same Order.

" To no one but a man endowed with the qualities which Sir B. Stephenson possessed, could duties so onerous and so confidential have been safely confided. He was indeed gifted—singularly gifted—with many valuable endowments : a clear understanding, a sound and candid judgment, quickness of capacity, a gentlemanly spirit under the nicest rules of discretion, unfailing zeal, perfect disinterestedness, and spotless integrity.

" In all his transactions every thought of *self* was forgotten. His time—his talents—his repose—(alas, the too needful repose required by a weakened frame and by advancing years)—were all devoted to the service of his country, and of those whom he considered to have

claims upon him ; and it may with truth be stated, that no man occupying his position in society, and advanced to his period of life, allowed himself fewer hours of relaxation. From the time of his appointment as Surveyor-General he never absented himself from the duties of his office, with one exception, for more than a few days, in any one year.

" In society Sir B. Stephenson was acceptable to persons of every age and every rank : shrewd, intelligent, with a vein of humour as original as it was delightful, possessing also a fund of information and of anecdote, the result of various and accurate reading, and close observation of men and manners. The characters of distinguished individuals and the events of past days were familiar to him, and he communicated his anecdotes and remarks in that simple and unaffected manner which heightened their intrinsic value.

" But in this faint sketch of a beloved and honoured friend his religious character must not be passed over in silence.

" It might be supposed that the early life of a soldier, spent in a foreign land, especially half a century ago, and the unceasing toil of business in after-life, were little calculated to induce strong religious principles and feelings ; but, as regards the character before us, this was not the case. A firm conviction of the truths of Christianity, professed with humility, and evidenced by its fruits, together with a sincere reverence for the doctrines and ordinances of the Established Church of his country, were among the strongest features of Sir B. Stephenson's character. In these principles he lived, he impressed them sedulously upon his children, and with these his last hours were soothed.

" For the world which benefited by his active and useful life, and for the numerous class of relatives and friends who loved and esteemed him, his death has occurred suddenly and prematurely. To himself, with a constitution ill calculated to bear the shock of further attacks or a continuance of mental labour, let us hope

that it has been 'a gentle wafting to immortal life.' This thought must allay the keen regrets of an affectionate and attached family, and of those who, with the writer, have long regarded his friendship and society as amongst their highest enjoyments.

"Sir B. Stephenson married, in 1805, Maria, the second daughter of the late Sir Peter Rivers Gay, Bart., by Martha, sister of the late Ven. Archdeacon Coxe, and by her he left two sons and six daughters.

"His body was interred in the family vault in Kensington Churchyard, on Saturday the 15th June. His funeral was, by his own express desire, conducted with the strictest privacy, and in the manner most suited to the simplicity of his character.

M."

Sir Benjamin had a family of twelve children, three sons and nine daughters. The eldest son, Arthur, born in 1810, died at the age of five years. He was buried in the nave of Winchester Cathedral, where on the stone which marks the spot there is, besides the name and dates, the single word "Eheu." Six of the daughters survived their father, only two of whom married—Mrs. Melvil Wilson and Mrs. Henry Giffard.

III

Sir William Henry Stephenson

Sir Benjamin's eldest surviving son, William Henry, was born on November 18, 1811, and his brother Frederick ten years later.

From their earliest years the brothers seem to have loved each other devotedly, a love that only increased with time, and the ten years' difference of age made the elder a sort of mentor and superior, to whom the little junior looked for instruction and advice. He used to tell us that some cherries and a slipper were always

kept in a cupboard of the room where his brother taught him to read and write, and were used for correction or encouragement as needed.

At the age of five years William was sent to a large school at Brentford, kept by Dr. Morris. His father took him there, and sat a while with the head master in a room overlooking the playground, where the new boy was sent to make acquaintance with his schoolfellows. Very soon William was seen offering to fight a boy bigger than himself, whereupon his father remarked, " He will do," and went home.

At first there were times when the little boy was very unhappy, though his peculiarly brave spirit even at that early age made him take a bright view of life whenever possible. He does not seem to have been bullied in the serious sense of the word, but was of course teased by those older and more knowing than was possible for his poor little five years to have made him.

At this school at Brentford the big schoolroom was roughly whitewashed, and with the whitewash a quantity of coarse hairs were mixed, these hairs in some places sticking out from the wall. This puzzled the little boy, and on his asking for an explanation, some youthful wag told him they were rats' tails, and if he looked long enough he would see the rats come out who lived in the walls. The idea of these rats was a great horror to him for a long time. Later on he found a solace at school in the possession of a garden, which he cultivated entirely himself, getting up at a very early hour in the morning to work in it, and letting himself down out of the dormitory window, under the impression that he was doing something very adventurous which the authorities would not allow had they known of it. But he used to say that he had no doubt that as a matter of fact they knew all about it, and thought it a perfectly harmless proceeding, though better winked at than recognised.

His ready wit and power of repartee must have

developed early, for at this same school where an unappetising rice pudding was often served before the meat (no doubt on Mrs. Squeers' principle of " taking the edge off the boys' appetites "), on being asked one day, " Stephenson, why don't you eat your pudding ? " the reply was immediate, " Too rich, sir ! "

This type of boy should have been popular with his fellows if not with his masters, but though he sometimes mentioned the names of those who were at school with him, they do not seem to have been amongst his acquaintances in later life.

No doubt he played all the school games then in vogue, but he never spoke of football or cricket matches with other schools, and did not himself take up any form of sport or amusement except rowing and driving, both of which he was always fond of, and the former he kept up to quite a late period of his life.

At the coronation of George IV., William, then only ten years of age, was one of the extra pages of honour, and wore a scarlet satin jacket and trunk hose slashed with white satin, a flat black velvet hat with a white ostrich feather, and a little sword. This dress was kept for many years, and was worn by his youngest daughter, to her great joy, when she was occasionally permitted to do so.

In those days his father lived in Hertford Street, Mayfair, and it is easy to imagine the excited pride with which the household must have regarded the royal carriage that fetched the little boy to take him to the Palace, where he joined the other pages and went in the procession to the Abbey.

A curious incident is connected with this page episode. The story is told in the Greville memoirs (p. 74, vol. i., 1st ed.), but not exactly as it was handed down to the next generation, and without mentioning Lady Conyngham's name. I believe the real facts to be as follows. Lady Conyngham gave some orders about furniture or the redecorating of her apartments in Kensington Palace to Sir Benjamin Stephenson, at that

time the head of the Board of Works. He refused to act upon her orders without some further confirmation, which so infuriated the King that he wanted to turn him out of his office. This Greville thinks was done, and that Sir Benjamin was "reinstated after many excuses and apologies for only doing what was his duty." However that may be, the King was determined to show his displeasure, and did so by striking the boy's name off the list of pages (he is said to have done so with his own hand), thus depriving him not only of the actual post of page, but of his claim to a commission in the Guards later on—a privilege attached to that post. The military career proposed for him was in consequence given up.

He stayed on at Dr. Morris's school till he was about fourteen, and soon after that was sent to live in a Swiss pasteur's family in Lausanne. There he learnt French and carried on other studies, and before he came away was introduced into the society of Lausanne, and took his place there as a young man ; being, he always told us, grown to his full height, 5 ft. 11 in., and with whiskers, albeit his years were so few. Soon after his fifteenth birthday he was given a nomination to the Treasury, and became a junior clerk in that office, where, according to his own account, he did nothing but spoil pens for the next twelve months. He must, however, have done something more than that as time went on, for he soon made his mark and rose steadily in the office.

In 1841 Sir Robert Peel made him his private secretary, a post he held for six years. When announcing this appointment to his mother he writes :—

"I have just been with Sir R. Peel, who in the kindest manner has made me his Private Secretary—the summit of my ambition *at present*. If anything could add to the gratification of the appointment, certainly the kind manner in which the appointment was conferred has increased its value in my eyes. I am now installed in Downing Street."

The way in which the words *at present* are underlined is significant of the intention and expectation of future success.

It must always be a matter of regret that there are no letters or papers of any general interest preserved from that most stirring period. William Stephenson was a singularly discreet man in the matter of expressing any opinion or making any statement in writing, and when his children were old enough to take an intelligent interest in politics the matters of their own time were not unnaturally more often the subject of talk ; but looking back one realises what a pity it was that he was not more frequently drawn into talk of those early days, and persuaded to give more details of his intimacy with Sir Robert Peel, in whose confidence he was, and whom he so greatly reverenced. The following letter shows how great was the sense of personal loss on Sir Robert Peel's death :—

"TREASURY, *July* 13.

" MY DEAR MOTHER,—He is gone. A sudden change came on after five, at which hour he was thought to be doing well. About six o'clock he became unconscious, and from that time sank rapidly till half-past eleven o'clock, when he expired, and I shall see him no more ! But what a loss for this country, and how little does anyone at this moment know what they have lost ! . . . The newspapers will give you many particulars that I cannot. Indeed, I have heard little and read nothing. The feeling seems universal. Whitehall Gardens, generally so tranquil, has been a scene of incessant traffic since Sunday, the greater part of the crowds, consisting of the middle and lower classes, all eagerly asking questions of anyone coming out of the house, and showing a touching anxiety about his fate. But he is gone, and I must not encourage the feelings my mind is too ready at this moment to give way to. I am inclined to think that Westminster Abbey will receive all that remains of that truly great man."

In the year 1847 he returned to his clerkship in the Treasury, and gradually attained to the highest post in that office, at that time called Principal Clerk Assistant. "This," he writes to his mother, "is the highest office in the Treasury any *clerk* can aspire to—the salary being £1100 a year at once. It is very flattering to have been selected for it, and I am proud and grateful accordingly. I think that under the peculiar circumstances you will excuse my adding anything more than that I am your affectionate son, William H. S."

During his earlier years in the Treasury, he and three friends kept a four-oared boat on the Thames at Whitehall Stairs, and found time for an almost daily row on summer evenings, while in holiday-times they went considerable distances. As I have said before, rowing and driving were the only kind of sport or game that he seems ever to have cared for, and it was indeed one of his strongest characteristics that he never needed any set form of occupation or amusement for his leisure moments. A walk out of doors or a book at home was enough. I believe his best and favourite relaxation was conversation with someone whose mind was akin to his own; and what racy and inspiring conversation it was to listen to, those who were privileged to hear can never forget.

He never had a club, even as a young unmarried man, though he lived in London all his life. In fact, I am inclined to think that he never did nor had anything for himself alone. That when his children were young their father should come home from a long day at his office and straightway sit down to read aloud to them, or on fine summer evenings should take them for a walk, was accepted as a most natural condition of things. Any deviation from the custom would have caused dire consternation and disappointment; but he never did disappoint them. An hour's reading before the dressing-bell rang, from Walter Scott or Shakespeare on week-days, and from *Paradise Lost* or the *Pilgrim's Progress* on Sundays, was an almost invariable practice, and

on summer evenings a walk in Hyde Park was as invariable.

He was simple in his tastes and habits, and never spent more than he could help on his own person, having a remarkable capacity for looking well dressed in clothes of considerable antiquity, and such things as hats and gloves had occasionally to be removed by force or fraud. A good carriage and an upright figure, together with scrupulous personal nicety, gave a general impression of smartness whatever clothes he wore. Astonishment was sometimes expressed by other men at his being ready to appear in society without any change of dress, after walking to and from his work, and spending the day in his office. A certain quiet dignity seemed to resist the very dust and dirt itself that will cling to the fretful and impatient man.

Anything like ostentation or show was extremely distasteful to him. At the date of his father's death very elaborate funerals were the custom, with as many plumes and horses to the hearse as possible. My father, however, having to make all the arrangements, had everything done simply, and on being remonstrated with by some of the family who considered that not enough respect was shown by this simplicity, he only observed, " A man who can't afford one horse to draw him when he is alive doesn't need four when he is dead ! "

Looking back, my father's life seems to have been one of continued work and self-sacrifice, but I believe he was a very happy man. A most beautiful spirit of contentment possessed him, and the older he grew the more forbearing and patient and broad-minded he became. He had much to contend with, much to try him, and was by nature fiery and impatient. In early days he was sometimes upset and angry over what seemed to the onlooker as the merest trifles ; but as age came on all was mellowed and softened, while the strength of character, and the clear outlook, and the power of quick decision never left him to the very last.

A letter from Sir Charles Trevelyan, written after he

left his post of Assistant Secretary to the Treasury to go to India as Governor of Madras, emphasises what I am trying to express here—my father's unselfish devotion to duty whether public or private—the absolute setting aside of self in the interests of others. The letter is dated " Off Ceylon, March 24, 1859."

" . . . Now, my dear Stephenson, I must satisfy my feelings by making in writing that acknowledgment which I have more than once verbally expressed. I am indebted to you for many years of cordial, honourable co-operation and support. You have admirably filled your important position, and we have all, in turn, profited by the good sense and good feelings by which your advice has always been distinguished. May you be rewarded as you deserve. The Queen does not possess a more valuable servant, or one more devotedly attached to the public interests. I have not failed to observe the self-denial with which you have sacrificed your natural and almost necessary enjoyments to the duties entrusted to you. . . .—Ever sincerely yours,

" C. E. Trevelyan."

My father's religious convictions were intense. It was said that as a young man his views were narrow, and indeed there was a time when Sunday was made rather a trying day to his children by a chill which fell on everything ; when certain subjects were considered " not Sunday talk," certain books " not Sunday books." Later on, though his own beliefs were if anything intensified, he would always listen to the expression of other views, and was ready to discuss them with interest. He had a way of saying, " Well, I think that wrong,—it would be wrong for me,—you must judge for yourself."

In 1838 he married Julia Elisabeth, the only daughter of Mr. William Richard Hamilton, a learned, cultivated, and most delightful man, to whom he was greatly attached. (See Note 9 to Crimean Letters.)

From 1839 to 1878 the family home was 12 Bolton Row (now part of the Curzon Hotel, Curzon Street,

Mayfair). Sir Benjamin Stephenson took the house the year his son married, and there all the family removed from Hertford Street, and the new-married couple joined them. A very few months later Sir Benjamin died, his wife and daughters went to live at Winchester in the Cathedral Close, and Mr. Hamilton took over the house in London, and went there with his wife and two sons from Stanley Grove, his house in Chelsea, now St. Mark's College.

In 12 Bolton Row all my parents' five children were born; there Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton died, the latter in 1847, the former in 1859. It was a wonderful household, and after Mrs. Hamilton's death most skilfully managed by my mother. It needed not only a clever, but a tactful and unselfish woman to carry on such an establishment with so little fuss or friction as was here accomplished.

She had her husband and children to consider, and always two brothers, and until his death her father; while later on for a few years came her son, with his wife and two children. All these varied interests were carefully looked to, and her patience and tact were unfailing. It must have been a difficult task to ensure the harmony and content of such a mixed multitude.

There were not many holidays in those days. Until the elder girls were grown up there was never any idea of leaving home for country visits, except for a yearly visit of a few days every autumn to their lifelong friend Mr. Henry Cox at Hillingdon.

Every summer a house was taken in the country for a few weeks, to which the household were deported by road and rail, never too far from London for the daily going up to the office; so that to the heads of the house little real holiday can have resulted. Two quite extraordinary events were a fortnight spent in Belgium with the two elder children one spring, and another time a fortnight was spent in Paris, where they were taken by my mother's brother, Charles Hamilton. I always hope it was the real refreshment to them that they deserved.

12 Bolton Row was a very lively centre. As long as Mr. Hamilton lived it was the meeting-place of all his family, and there were big parties at Christmas and the New Year, and a children's ball every winter. Many interesting people whom some of us were too young to appreciate came to the house. There is a tradition that the youngest daughter once sat on the knee of the great Duke of Wellington; but if it is true, she was quite unaware of the extent of the privilege, though no doubt pleased to be taken notice of. Later on, as the children grew up, everything was done for their happiness and comfort, and one can only sigh to think how greedily it was all accepted and with how little real gratitude at the time.

Dances and theatricals were arranged for every winter, the mistress of the house having a perfect genius for entertaining. The only son and the eldest born was endowed with many gifts that helped to ensure these performances being of a higher order than is often the case. He had a ready pen, and when a young clerk in the Treasury wrote the words for the first musical sketch of the composer Frederic Clay, then also a clerk in the Treasury and a lifelong friend. *The Idle Apprentices* was the first of three operettas written by these two young men, and was performed by them and their friends in the drawing-rooms of 12 Bolton Row. At one time his sisters took to acting, and they owed much of any success they attained to the advice and assistance of their brother. They, however, were never allowed to act away from home, so that a wholesome, though at the time provoking, check was offered to their enthusiasm.

Charlie Stephenson made a name for himself conjointly with Clement Scott under the pseudonyms of Bolton Rowe and Savile Rowe in the production of three plays adapted from the French — *Peril*, *Diplomacy*, and *Impulse*—and wrote the words for Alfred Cellier's *Dorothy* and *Dora*.

In 1862 my father was made Chairman of the

Board of Inland Revenue, and retained that office until his retirement from public life in 1877. He had previously in 1871 received the K.C.B.

The conferring of this honour was announced to him in a private letter from Mr. Gladstone :—

"*Private.*

"11 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE,
Oct. 24, 1871.

"DEAR MR. STEPHENSON,—I have now an opportunity which I shall be very glad with your permission to turn to account of recommending your name to Her Majesty for the Civil K.C.B. I only await your approval, which I hope it may be agreeable to you to give.—Believe me, sincerely yours,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

The Treasury Minute of July 2, 1877, announcing his resignation was as follows :—

"The First Lord of the Treasury and the Chancellor of the Exchequer bring under the notice of the Board the letter of Sir William Stephenson, K.C.B., of the 9th ult., communicating his resignation of the office of Commissioner and Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, and asking that he may be recommended to the pension to which his services may be held to entitle him. Sir William Stephenson has completed upwards of fifty years in the public service, and has throughout that lengthened period deservedly enjoyed the reputation of being one of the most valuable and efficient members of the distinguished body to which he has belonged, and the honour of which he has done so much to uphold.

"As a principal officer of the Treasury for many years, and of late as Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, he has rendered the most important services to the State, and has acquired the confidence, the respect, and the regard of all who have been brought into communication with him. His loss must be deeply felt,

but the work which he has done and the example which he has set cannot fail to bear good fruit even after he himself shall have left his office ; and it may not be too much to hope that his well-known public spirit and the interest which he feels for the profession to which he has devoted his life may incline him in his retirement to give the Government from time to time the advantage of his experience and of his judgment. Sir William Stephenson entered the public service at the early age of fifteen, and according to strict rule his first year would not count towards his pension. But the First Lord and the Chancellor of the Exchequer are of opinion that the rule excluding service under sixteen from the pension reckoning ought in this instance to be dispensed with on the ground of merit, and they accordingly recommend that Sir William Stephenson be granted a retiring allowance of £2000 a year, being the full amount of his salary. My Lords approve."

This was the last instance of a pension amounting to the full sum of the salary being granted to retiring civil servants.

Before the Treasury Minute was published a paragraph appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of Wednesday, June 20, 1877, to the following effect :—

" The retirement of Sir William Stephenson from the post of Chairman of the Inland Revenue deprives the Civil Service of one of its most able and eminent members. When fifty years ago Sir William Stephenson entered the Treasury as a junior clerk, the system of open competition for public appointments was not even talked of. Clerks were nominated to the Treasury as to other public offices by Cabinet Ministers ; and whatever may be the result of modern improvements, it cannot be denied that the old days of selection produced a class of public servants of whom the Civil Service of any nation might be proud, and of whom Sir William Stephenson is a notable example. As private secretary to Sir Robert Peel for some years, he had the advantage of a training under that statesman to which he no doubt owed much of the

administrative ability he has so signally displayed in his official career. For many years Sir William Stephenson was the trusty and trustworthy adviser of successive Governments on questions not only relating to Treasury business, but also to that of other Departments, and his sound judgment and experience rendered him invaluable as a guide and adviser to 'My Lords,' whenever they found themselves in a difficulty. Sir George Lewis paid no slight compliment to Sir William Stephenson's tact when he remarked that 'he was the best witness before a committee that he had ever seen.' "

Two letters which he received at the time of his retirement plainly show the estimation in which his services were held.

"2 WHITEHALL GARDENS, *May* 15, 1877.

" DEAR SIR WILLIAM,—It would be unreasonably selfish in me to grudge your retirement after the labours of fifty years! I ought rather to congratulate you on the jubilee of a public service which has rarely for its intelligence and fidelity been equalled. I will take the necessary steps about the pension which you have so honourably obtained: I trust, however, that there may yet be occasions when the country may profit by your experience and abilities. I must apologise for not having replied to you before, but I have been quite incapacitated by gout from writing, which I fear this note too clearly proves.—I am, dear Sir William, very truly yours, BEACONSFIELD."

"TREASURY, *June* 25, 1877.

" MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,—I hope you will consent to remain on the Pensions Commutation Board as our representative. It is hardly fair perhaps to ask you to work on when the time has arrived at which you have a right to claim complete rest, but I should urge on the other side of the question, that the work is not very hard, that your experience is very valuable to

the Government, and the personal and perhaps selfish reason that we should be very sorry indeed to part with you. I hope you will consent to stay.—Yours very sincerely, W. H. Smith."

His work at the Inland Revenue Office brought him into contact with various Chancellors of the Exchequer, for whom he had to prepare the details of the Budget speech in the House of Commons. Of these the one he preferred to work with was Mr. Gladstone, although he always said that he gave more trouble than all the rest put together, by insisting upon thoroughly going into and understanding every detail that he intended to make use of in his speech. Two or three interviews were required with their searching questions and acute comments before the Budget night, and this was what my father appreciated.

Disraeli, on the other hand, simply expected to be supplied with perfectly correct facts, and required no personal interview, communicating with the Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue through a private secretary, and was apt to treat him as a useful and accurate machine.

Mr. Robert Lowe was on a different plane altogether. He not only required instruction in facts, but needed the presence of the Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue to remind him of them during the progress of his speech. He was, however, easy and pleasant to work with, and a personal friend.

Disraeli was the only high official my father was ever heard to say he disliked working with, and that he never said while in office himself, being far too good a disciplinarian to talk about those he had to serve under, when he did not share their views.

Shortly after retiring from public life Sir William gave up his London house, and after spending some months abroad settled down in 1879 in the country, where for the rest of his life, some twenty years, he rented The Chestnuts, near Uxbridge, a place situated on

the edge of the park of Hillingdon House, the property of his old friend Mr. Henry Cox.

It was a pleasant old house, with a garden only divided from the park of Hillingdon House by a ha-ha, and with a wall on one side of good old red brick from which mullions sprouted, and almost covered by creepers, a magnificent purple clematis especially delighting the eye. Half-way down the wall a garden room or orangery was built out, which was used for keeping garden chairs and games, and where sometimes excellent and hospitable afternoon teas were served when it was damp, or too late in the year for the usual tea in the garden, and not late enough to be confined to the house. Through the wall a door opened on to a space devoted to poultry and pigs (where Betsy the old sow, who was quite a personage, brought up many a succulent family), then to a paddock for the cows, and finally to a good kitchen garden with a shrubbery walk up one side.

The drawing-room, with its dark blue walls and curtains, fine old china, and few good pictures, such as a graceful portrait of one ancestress, sitting in the grounds of her home, the Château de Prangin, near Geneva, and an excellent pastel of another, is a memory full of charm. To one little grandson, who was always a welcome visitor in later years, the whole place was an enchanted palace, where he was busy from morning till night with one fascinating occupation after another, in the company of "young grandpapa," as he was always called, or the much-loved aunts.

It was thought by many to be very extraordinary that a man who had lived all his life in London, a busy, fully occupied life surrounded by people and movement of all sorts, should be able to settle down to a quiet country existence, with no special occupation and very little society outside his own family. He took great interest in the town of Uxbridge and in the affairs of his own parish, but such work as he did occupied but little of his time, though of the utmost value to those

concerned. He took long walks and read enormously, and his essentially contented mind prevented his feeling dull or bored.

Seeing that his life had been passed almost exclusively in London, his knowledge of country things was remarkable, and he specially prided himself upon knowing the names of trees, however unusual and unknown to people in general. I can see now the sceptical annoyance expressed on the countenance of a country gentleman who was puzzled about a peculiar tree in his grounds, which Sir William at once pronounced to be an abele tree (species of poplar), and this, to his host's great surprise, proved to be the correct name.

He had a great love for animals, and in early days in London possessed a delightful Scotch terrier. This dog lived to be sixteen years old, and was a friend up to the last, sleeping in his master's room and taking long walks with him. The crust he always had at breakfast-time could not be properly enjoyed unless his master threw it some distance; then, being retrieved and well shaken, it was held between the fore-paws and gnawed in a sort of savage triumph. Peace to his ashes! Many a man might be glad to add as much to the joy of life, and to be as long and truly mourned as this good old four-footed friend.

Another favourite was a bullfinch belonging to his youngest daughter. "Bully" had been trained as a piping bullfinch, but soon forgot his tiresome tune, retaining only the beautiful acquired whistle so unlike the monotonous note of the bird in its wild state.

Sir William was so little at home on week-days that he seldom heard the bird's song, but on Sundays, if Bully began his soft strain (and very soft it was, a sort of whispered harmonious chuckle), nothing would induce him to leave the room, and the rest of the party would often go off to luncheon leaving him entranced.

He was always good to the dogs that belonged to other people, but latterly had none of his own, keenly feeling the anxiety of being responsible for all the

THE CHESTNUTS

(From a photograph)

[*To face p.* 20

possibilities of unlawful hunting, fighting, and the like, which he no longer cared to encounter. A pet cat was, however, felt to be not so disturbing an element; he was soft, and warm, and quiet, and though very selfish and always taking possession of the most comfortable chair if he had the chance, which his master permitted him to retain when he found him there, "Tummy" was in a way attached to his master, and would even slowly trot across the lawn to join him in a quiet stroll.

This peaceful country life continued undisturbed for a few years only. In 1883 came the unexpected and terrible blow of his wife's death. After a small children's party at The Chestnuts, she was going to her room, apparently in her usual health, when one of her daughters, who was following her, saw a painful change come over her face; an illness followed from which she never rallied. A few weeks she lingered, and then that very beautiful life was ended.

The loss to my father was unspeakable. Their forty-five years of married life had been years of the closest intimacy and the deepest affection, and they had hardly ever been parted. But here again character asserted itself, and he refused to spoil the lives of those around him by giving way to expressions of grief or by brooding over his own sorrow. "Sorrow is always selfish," he one day said.

He very soon took up the threads of life again, and for the next seven years continued the same quiet, useful existence which had satisfied him in the past. His happiness was now centred in the three daughters who lived with him, clever, capable women, who made life interesting as well as comfortable, and of whose devotion he would sometimes speak in terms of the profoundest gratitude and affection.

And so he lived on in his country home, loved and appreciated by all with whom he came in contact, and there he died in March 1898.

It has been difficult, almost impossible, to give an adequate idea of a life in which there were few events

of a public nature, but which was a gradual development of a character of singular nobility and strength.

The following extracts from the obituary notice which appeared in the local paper, and from the funeral sermon preached by the Vicar of St. Andrew's, Uxbridge, will give a good idea of how Sir William Stephenson spent the last years of his life, and of the impression he made on those amongst whom he lived.

From the "Uxbridge Gazette," March 5, 1898

"Sir William Henry Stephenson, K.C.B., died on Tuesday morning last at a quarter-past nine at his residence, The Chestnuts, Uxbridge, at the age of 86. . . . It was remarkable in Sir William's case how comparatively little people thought of him as old; even now it is not four years since he was asked, and indeed pressed again and again, to assume a new public duty, a duty involving a considerable sacrifice of time, a considerable expense of energy, and undoubtedly a great tax upon the nerves and temper of men in the very prime of life. We refer to the invitation extended to Sir William Stephenson as Chairman of the expiring local board to become Chairman of the new Urban District Council of Uxbridge. He declined, and anyone will now say that he declined naturally and of course; yet it is within our recollection, and in this statement we shall be borne out by the memory of all those who are familiar with the circumstances of the public life at that time, that the refusal was then by no means taken as a matter of course, but that, as we have stated above, it in the first instance only led to a further pressure by way of invitation. Yet Sir William was then 83 years of age. Nor did his retirement from the local authority of Uxbridge mean the complete cessation of his public career, for as County Councillor of the Uxbridge Division he had become Chairman of the local centre of the Technical Education Committee, a position which he retained to the last. . . . His chairmanship was not

viewed by him at any time as a merely nominal one, but he looked upon it as involving duties which needed careful, prompt, and skilled discharge. So too his work at St. Andrew's Church was continued zealously by him . . . showing how completely he retained, till his final illness, the possession of his bodily and mental faculties. . . . Those who knew his history would probably be inclined to say that public service had become with him if not an essential of his life at least an overmastering second nature. Trained to it in its very centre—that is, in the service of the State—from his sixteenth year, and pursuing it without intermission in the capital of the land for over half a century, habits mental and physical must have formed themselves in him that only a continued sphere of action amongst large bodies of his fellow-men could ever satisfy. . . . Sir William came to The Chestnuts some twenty years ago, and, as will be surmised, it was not long before his help was sought in the management of many local matters. In 1882 he was appointed Chairman of the Local Board of Health, and sat as such continuously till December 1894, but elected to resign the chairmanship when the old Board of Health became, after the Act of 1894, the new Urban District Council. . . . When any distinct and marked act of town life had to be done, Sir William was looked to as peculiarly the one to be made its president and leader."

In the funeral sermon the Vicar said : " If his civil record was distinguished, what shall we say of his devotion to his God and of his regularity in His house ? . . . He has not missed Sunday morning or evening service, or the Holy Communion when it was celebrated late either on Sunday or week-day, or one of the Wednesday or Friday morning services, except when absolutely compelled to do so by ill-health or absence from home ; and often of late we have seen him walk across the park in the cold and rain. His intense devotion in church was most remarkable. He has often

told me how dear have been to him the quiet morning services on Wednesdays and Fridays, at which his face would shine as if lit up by some heavenly light. His favourite verse, I am told, was George Herbert's

> 'Find out men's wants and will,
> And meet them there. All worldly joys go less
> To the one joy of doing kindnesses.'

"I regard Sir William Stephenson as one of the most holy, God-fearing men with whom it has been my pleasure to be associated. He always acted from the highest motives, and was quite fearless in his opinions."

Another tribute to his memory is delightfully expressed in a letter from one of his neighbours, which was printed in the *Uxbridge Gazette* of March 12, 1898 :—

"Sir,—As I had not the honour of being mentioned in your paper as amongst the clergy attending the funeral of the late Sir William Stephenson, I venture to trouble you with a few lines. My own profound esteem, respect, and admiration for him make me unduly sensitive perhaps at this omission. At the same time, it gives me the opportunity to express what so many of us feel concerning personal loss. Your excellent notice of his public honours, his national services, and his deserved renown is now before me ; but the man himself in his charm of personal kindliness and thoughtfulness—who can describe him ? There was such intellectual freshness, such quick instinct, such inspiring power in his conversation, and such courteous welcome ever given to his friends, that he will be missed indeed. To watch him in his familiar place in church at St. Andrew's was to feel how truly the hearer helps to make the preacher ; he was not of those who think it good taste to be unenthusiastic, nor was there any of the modern intellectual indifferentism about him. A great reader, a clear thinker, and a devout student, he was one of the most lovely and lovable characters I have ever known. Aged he might be so far as years are concerned, but in thought

and heart he was young to the very last. He rests now ; peace be with his memory ! All classes respected and loved him, and the grief at his funeral was evidently deep and real. After this little record of personal sentiments about him, you will understand why, this once, I was not content to be included in your reporter's sentence, ' and many others,' at his funeral.—Yours truly, W. Mann Statham.

"The Rectory, Ivor Heath, *March* 5, 1898."

No more appropriate close to the sketch of this life can be found than the following words from a letter written to his eldest daughter by his brother :—

"83 St. George's Square, *March* 1898.

" I am not going to indulge in any commonplace or other expressions of sympathy ; coming from me, they would be more than unnecessary. You all know of my deep feeling of love for you all, from birth upwards [? *too well*], to require any such expression. What I do want to say is that you will, I hope, look upon me as your best friend and stand-by, and I hope and trust that I shall always prove so. I never can stand even in the shadow of him we have lost, but I may be of use, and I hope even of some comfort—try me. My dear Susy, what a truly noble character has passed away from us ; in all my experience of life, I have never met one more deserving that title."

IV

Sir F. C. A. Stephenson

Sir Benjamin Stephenson's youngest son, Frederick Charles Arthur, was born on July 17, 1821. He seems to have been a delightful child, brimful of fun and mischief, but never worrying his elders with his jokes and pranks. Lovableness is what stands out

first in his character ; gradually one realises the noble qualities that lay at the root of this characteristic, but at the first glance the fact is apparent that everybody loved him. The courtesy and consideration which were so strongly marked in his later years were there apparently from babyhood. So also his appreciation of beauty and kindness in women dates from very early days.

His eldest sister has told of his standing on the nursery table to be dressed and saying to his nurse as he looked up into her face and stroked it, " My Betty, you are a very pretty girl ! " He must always have disarmed any harsh or severe judgment. In later days, when a child myself, I can well remember noticing with considerable surprise the look of tender indulgence on the face of my austere grandmother as she watched her much-loved Frederick playing some trick which would have been sharply reprimanded in anyone else. It seemed impossible to resent whatever he chose to do, the touch was so light, the intention so single-minded.

Like his brother William, he left home very early, going when only six years old to a small school at Turnham Green, whence he was removed a year or two later to Dr. Morris's at Brentford, where his brother had preceded him. At nine years old he was made page of honour to William IV., and was present at the coronation. He became a great favourite with the good-natured old King, who was so delighted with the way in which his page enjoyed the first play at which he attended His Majesty, and with his infectious laugh, that he always sent for him when going to see anything especially amusing. He used to tell us how the King one day " knighted " his little page, by calling jokingly down the dinner-table to him, " The pleasure of a glass of wine with you, Sir Frederick." This he always said he might have claimed as knighthood.

After leaving school, he was sent to Dieppe to learn French. One letter written then to his eldest sister is

still preserved, and bears the postmark " Sp. 10. 1836." In it he says how happy he is with " M. and Mme Réville, who treat me like a spoilt child." He goes to the play every other night, " which I find improves me wonderfully, so that when I go to-night I expect to understand it perfectly." He is introduced to " an old lady named Mrs. Righton. . . . I often go and drink tea there, but then the company is all French, so that it does me no harm." Even at fifteen he wanted to do his work thoroughly. Then he tells how " last Sunday I saw what they *call* a review, but I never saw before, and never wish to see again, such another review. I would ten thousand times rather have seen half a hundred soldiers drilled in Hyde Park. The company itself consisted of about 200 men, and I may say one-third of them were dressed in plain clothes, with nothing military about them except their muskets and the crossbands with their cartridge-boxes ; some with yellow, some with white gloves, some with none at all, and some of them even had spectacles ; and when they began to be drilled it was horrid, and when they began to march it was enough to disgust ' Diabolum ipsum,' some of them laughing, talking, and looking round, some out of step, some shouldering their arms, some carrying their arms, and when they were commanded to halt I assure you several of them in the front were half a yard ahead of the rest ; in short, it was the most abominable compound of ill discipline and bad management that ever was."

One wonders what this " review " can have been ? Probably the youthful contempt expressed by the budding soldier was expended upon worthy patriots trying to fit themselves for service in the National Guard.

Later on he went to Germany, and a letter from there to all his sisters conjointly, and dated Burgwedel, Jan. 29, 1840, has some amusing passages. He prefers this place to Hanover, which he designates " that dust hole," and is hugely delighted with some sledging

parties which he joined: "about sixteen of us, all young, with a couple of married chaperones for propriety's sake, but including the two said ladies I don't suppose the oldest among us is twenty-six. We generally go to a little village about five miles off, where we drink coffee, and then amuse ourselves with playing round games, acting charades, etc." This simple form of dissipation over (to which he refers as being "thoroughly satiated with amusement"!), they drive home, sometimes after dark, singing and laughing, and, "then oh! the best part comes. The gentlemen are entitled to what is called Sledge Fee, which consists in giving and receiving from all the ladies—a kiss. It is a charming custom, and I wish it were more universally adopted in England."

These may be thought trivialities hardly worth recording; but the boy was father to the man, and always Sir Frederick could enjoy simple amusements, and would see no harm in simple familiarities.

He kept up his knowledge of both the languages that he had learnt in his youth, but was never a fluent linguist.

In July 1837, when he was just sixteen years old, he was gazetted Ensign and Lieutenant of the Scots Fusilier Guards, the name of the Scots Guards at that date.

The *Broad Arrow and Military Gazette* of Dec. 26, 1891, in a "Service Portrait" of Sir Frederick Stephenson, says that in 1845 he was appointed Adjutant of the first battalion of his regiment, and that "his commanding officer was the late Sir William Knollys, . . . between the two a great friendship and mutual respect existed, which lasted unimpaired till Sir William Knollys' death, nearly forty years later. 'Ben' Stephenson, as he was called, gradually gained ground in the estimation of his brother-officers. Owing to his devotion to his profession, his amiable disposition, his unruffled temper, and his sound judgment, he soon was regarded with positive affection, not only by the

officers of his own, but also by those of the two other regiments of Guards. . . . When the Crimean War broke out he was at once appointed Brigade-Major to the Brigade of Guards sent out to the East."

Being a poor man and unable to purchase his steps, he was often passed over for promotion, and it was only after seventeen years' service that he got his company without purchase, and in 1854 was gazetted Captain and Lieutenant-Colonel.

To continue the quotation :—

" This promotion necessitated the surrender of his staff appointment, and he rejoined his battalion in command of the light—called the left flank—company, with which he was present at the Alma, at Inkerman, and the siege of Sebastopol. On the morning of the battle of Inkerman Lieutenant-Colonel Stephenson was with his company on picket ; when the battle had raged some little time he was ordered to quit his post and join his battalion. Before he could do so, he saw, on entering the fighting area, a Russian battalion in column advancing. Without a moment's hesitation, Stephenson with his gallant Light Bobs ' went for ' this column, which, startled at the audacity of their foe, declined the encounter and executed a strategic movement to the rear. . . . For his services during the war with Russia he was mentioned in dispatches and received the following decorations : C.B. Crimean medal with four clasps, Turkish medal, Knight of Legion of Honour, and 4th Class of the Medjidieh."

The letters from the Crimea tell the story of that time with remarkable clearness, and are peculiarly characteristic of the writer. They are not published now with any idea of adding a page to history, but only to help in delineating the character of Frederick Stephenson. It is from others alone that we gather any details of personal conduct, and wherever his name is mentioned it is with affection and respect ; but in every line of the letters the man's character is evident, self-control and consideration for others

being everywhere conspicuous. I am permitted to quote from the memoirs of Lord Wantage his words in a letter from the Crimea written when he was Captain Robert Lindsay. He says : " The General has appointed Colonel Stephenson as military secretary. Ben Stephenson is in my regiment, and the very best fellow in the world. I have the greatest respect and love for him. The General knew nothing of him except by reputation, so the appointment was a very flattering one to him." This was written in the early days of a friendship which grew ever stronger and deeper, and was only cut short by the death of Lord Wantage in 1900.

Of this friendship Lady Wantage has written the following warm testimony : " The intimacy between my husband and the General [Frederick Stephenson] dates from Crimean days. They were in the same regiment, and though the General was by many, I think ten, years his senior, yet similarity in character, in standard of conduct, and in views of life, drew them together and laid the foundation of a lifelong friendship, which increased as years went on, and in that friendship it was my privilege to share."

With reference to this post of military secretary to General Simpson, a post he was not destined to fill, a letter from Frederick Hamilton (afterwards General Sir Frederick Hamilton, K.C.B.), written to Frederick Stephenson's brother, will be of interest.

" . . . I cannot let this day pass over without congratulating you most heartily on Frederick's appointment. No man in or out of the army without great public or private interest ever received an appointment in so honourable a manner, so unsolicited and so unexpectedly; he owes it entirely to the character he had gained for himself amongst his superiors as a man of business and intelligence, and I can [? *confidently*] say no appointment has ever given such universal cause of satisfaction amongst his brother-officers and, as far as I have heard, in the army generally."

When, instead of taking up the post of military

secretary, Frederick Stephenson was invalided home, Lord Wantage wrote: " Ben Stephenson leaves the Crimea to-morrow for England; he is very ill, and could not be expected to live if he remained."

A great friend and brother-officer, Hugh Drummond, who went home severely wounded, and subsequently died, also wrote: " Poor dear Stephenson is very ill and weak, a wreck of what he was, a misery. I want him to go at once, but he will not. I wish to goodness he had been coming with us. I do not like his stopping here at all in his present state. It is a sad thing for him, just as he had got the place of all others he is fit for. I am very sorry for dear old Ben."

" Ben " was the nickname he went by up to the day of his death, its origin being variously given as derived from his father's name Benjamin, and from one of Dickens's characters. It must, I think, have been a combination of the two, for one of his brother-officers writes to me: " When *Oliver Twist* came out I think the battalion was at Winchester. Colonel Berkeley was nicknamed ' the Dodger,' Lord Abinger ' Charley Bates,' and your uncle ' Conkey Ben.' " Now the only " Conkey " in *Oliver Twist* is Conkey Chickweed, so Ben was perhaps a schoolboy nickname, to which Conkey was added as being appropriate to his somewhat prominent nose. Names from Dickens's popular works must have been the fashion of that day, for a brother-officer and namesake, Sussex Stephenson, was always known as " Stiggins " without any apparent reason.

Frederick Stephenson came home as quickly as possible, stopping in Paris at the house of his sister, Mrs. Melvil Wilson. Such was his ragged and starved appearance that the man-servant, who knew him well, had almost turned him away from the door as a disreputable person. The man, however, recognised his voice, and as soon as he was inside the door all his troubles seemed over. Mrs. Wilson was noted for the excellent appointment of her house, and for her cuisine; she was also a capable woman in a sick-

room, and very fond of her brother. A lavish use of hot water, good soap, and fine towels (undreamed-of luxuries for the last year), then a comfortable bed with fine clean linen, and the attendance of a charming woman who brought soup, jellies, and cooling drinks, made the poor worn-out invalid feel as though he were in Paradise. It was, however, some time before he recovered health and strength enough to enable him to go home to England, where his mother and the rest of his family eagerly awaited him.

A month or two spent at home restored him sufficiently to allow of his return to the scene of action, where the great disappointment faced him of finding the post of military secretary to the Commander-in-Chief no longer open to him. As will be seen by his letters to his brother, he accepted the inevitable with his usual cheerful reasonableness. Still greater disappointments and disagreeables were to be faced later on in China and in Egypt, and to be met and overcome in the same spirit. It was always a matter of great regret to him that he got back too late to be present when at last Sebastopol fell. He was able, however, to return home with his regiment, and to march into London with them on July 9, 1856.

In 1857 came the war with China, and Frederick Stephenson was appointed Assistant Adjutant-General to the forces sent out, and remained there till 1861.

It was a period of very mixed experiences, as will be seen by his letters home at that date, but the time he spent under Sir Hope Grant's command was so agreeable to him that it quite outweighed his previous annoyances.

In Captain Henry Knollys' *Incidents of the China War of 1860*, a book chiefly compiled from Sir Hope Grant's private diaries, the following passage is quoted from his list of staff officers :—

"Colonel Stephenson, Scots Fusilier Guards, Deputy Adjutant-General. I consider myself fortunate in this appointment, as not only was he in every respect a first-rate officer, but he possessed a peculiarly conciliatory manner, which smoothed over many difficulties,

and specially qualified him for the post of Adjutant-General."

The letters from China are in some respects the most interesting of all. The descriptions of places and people are lively and graphic, and the writer's references to his own position, with its attendant disagreeables, brings out his character very clearly, while at the same time he tells the story of a campaign that has been very seldom described ; it was so completely overshadowed by the Indian Mutiny that public attention was turned from it at the time, and not very much has been written about it since.

He gives a capital account of the shipwreck of the *Transit* on the voyage out, but it is only from a letter published in the papers at the time, and written by an officer who was on board the ship, but whose name is not given, that we learn the following details :—

"Colonel S——, Scots Fusilier Guards, is in command, and there is in my opinion no man better fitted for high command, as, with a temper most enviable, he has a calmness, firmness, and self-possession which has proved of essential service to us all. He was the last of our party to leave the ship."

After his return from China in 1861 Frederick Stephenson had only a few months at home, and it was a sad time. His mother, Lady Stephenson, to whom he was deeply attached and to whom the greater number of his letters up to this time had been addressed, was in failing health, and died in November of that year at the age of eighty-one. He felt her loss keenly, and it is not unlikely that to this cause may be attributed the fact that the next set of letters, those from Canada, are of very slight interest. He must have felt when writing them that the one to whom he could say everything, and to whom the slightest detail was precious, was no longer there to read and answer what he wrote, and that stayed his hand and made his written thoughts less free.

There was, it is true, not so much that was interesting

to write about as in the earlier letters ; anyway, the fact remains that the letters from Canada written in 1862 and the two following years are of no general interest, though a few extracts are worth quoting and will be given below.

The Guards had been ordered out to Canada after the " Trent Affair," as it was called, when Messrs. Slidell and Mason, two Confederate envoys who were on their way to Europe in the British mail packet *Trent*, were arrested and made prisoners by Captain Wilkes of the U.S. Federal warship *San Jacinto*. This incident nearly led to war between England and America, but was settled on January 1, 1862, a week or so after the Guards left England. Happily their services were never required, and they remained quartered in Montreal, enjoying what seems to have been a very agreeable social life.

On the passage out ill-luck for the third time attended Frederick Stephenson's sea voyages. On the way to the Crimea the ship hardly avoided running on a rock off Cape Matapan ; on the way to China the *Transit* was shipwrecked on the island of Banca. This time the s.s. *Parana*, after a good journey across the Atlantic, met with fogs, gales, and snowstorms as soon as she reached the banks of Newfoundland.

" On the 1st Jan. (1862) we passed the Bird Rocks . . . and on the 3rd, Friday, we got as far as Point des Monts. The weather, which all this time had been so thick that we could never see the sun, was now so bad and the wind so strong that the captain determined to anchor till the weather improved. He made for Trinity Bay, but we were so out of our reckoning in consequence of the hazy weather and incessant snow that we unexpectedly found ourselves off the Manicouagan Peninsula, hard and fast upon a shoal, the wind blowing hard all the time, but luckily offshore, so that by getting some sails set we at last managed to get the ship off."

Shortly after this they got into an icepack through which they tried to force their way but had to turn back

and give up all hope of reaching Quebec by way of the St. Lawrence. They made for Cape Breton Island and thence went to Halifax, and it was only after thirty days that they finally reached St. John, New Brunswick. As usual, he speaks moderately and without exaggeration of their adventures, but as a matter of fact the *Parana* had a very narrow escape.

One hundred and thirty miles of the journey from St. John to Montreal was performed in sleighs and was very well managed, the men getting into good sleeping quarters after a hot meal every night, and all seem to have enjoyed it as a " pleasure trip." Great anxiety was felt by the officers " in consequence of the number of crimps along the whole line looking out for opportunities to induce our men to desert. The road runs nearly the whole way within six or seven miles of the American frontier, sometimes three or four, and for one stage of thirty-six miles it is literally on it. This, of course, offered immense facilities, and the enormous price the crimps offered was a great temptation. We got through, however, without the loss of a man; two we lost at St. John before leaving, but on the road none."

There is one point of interest in the letters from Canada which must not be left unnoticed. At first the references to the Americans (always called Yankees) are prejudiced and contemptuous, almost abusive; later on, after a tour made in the States, there is a remarkable change of tone. The comforts of the railway travelling and the excellence of hotels are dwelt on first; then the admirable arrangements of the State prison in New York, for which the Americans " are deservedly celebrated," are referred to; then the civility he meets with everywhere strikes him very much; and so on from one thing to another, till he winds up with: " In short, here I am back again [*in Montreal*], a wiser man, I hope, than when I set out, with many prejudices dispelled, and replaced by useful information on many points."

Few of the Canadian letters have been preserved, and only short extracts are given, for, as has been said, the bulk of them possess no general interest.

Sleighing for mere pleasure he never took to, finding it difficult to keep warm (he had always since the China experiences been very susceptible to cold), and he preferred snow-shoeing or walking. There are some amusing references to the beauty of the ladies' skating, and to the graceful manner in which they contrived to fall—" not even an ankle was visible." Reading this in the light of present-day fashion (1914), one is forced to the conclusion that this would not now be a matter of much moment.

This graceful attitude was accomplished " in spite of crinoline, which is worn out here with the same reckless disregard to our feelings which is so unblushingly persisted in at home." A photograph taken at this date at the Falls of Niagara, when he visited them with several friends, certainly suggests the idea that the ladies' crinolines challenged the Falls in their amplitude.

After Lady Stephenson's death in 1861, her daughters left the apartments in Hampton Court Palace, and Frederick Stephenson made his home when in England in his brother's house in London, to the great joy of its inmates. In 1868 he became Major-General and for some time remained unemployed, and took advantage of his leisure to travel on the Continent.

In the winter of 1867–68 he took two of his nieces to Italy for three months, staying at Florence, Venice, Naples, and Rome for some time, and visiting many other interesting cities on the road. It is hard to say whether art or nature pleased him most in these travels. Everything beautiful appealed to him, and he always approached his subject with so much reverence and so keen a desire to learn all that was possible connected with it, that travelling with him was not only a pleasure but an education.

A year or two later he visited Spain, travelling with a friend, and thence brought back a store of know-

ledge and memories that he liked to talk of all the rest of his life. He also revisited Rome and Naples with his brother and others of the family.

During 1873–74 he was Acting Inspector-General of the Auxiliary Forces, and in 1876 was given the command of the Home District, " which," to quote the article in the *Broad Arrow* already referred to, " he held with pleasure and profit to those under his orders till July 1879, when he again reverted to the unemployed list, having been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General."

The same article says :—

" Sir Frederick Stephenson is one of the most striking existing illustrations of modesty and merit. In the Army, where one man's death or failure means another man's advancement, there is, as is inevitable, a great deal of jealousy and depreciation. Sir Frederick Stephenson, owing to his modesty, straightforwardness, amiability, and good manners, is a remarkable exception to the general rule, which is that success is tempered by detraction. He is undoubtedly one of the most popular —if not the most popular—men in the Army, and has not, we believe, an enemy in the world except perhaps the irrepressible Colonel Dawkins. Had he been a richer man he might have obtained promotion, and consequently opportunities of distinction earlier ; had he practised, as have too many eminent persons in the present day, the art of self-advertisement, his achievements might have won for him a greater name. Yet he has much to console him in the conviction that he is universally respected and beloved, and that the Brigade of Guards point to him with pride as one of the most worthy and knightly of the illustrious list of distinguished officers which that nursery of distinguished officers has given to the service of their sovereign and country. He himself, we are sure,—so humble is his opinion of himself,—is convinced that he has only done his duty in a simple fashion, and that for so doing he has been rewarded even above his deserts."

The reference to Colonel Dawkins will not be under-

stood to-day without some explanation. The facts were briefly as follows :—

Colonel Dawkins, who was also a Guardsman, was, for certain reasons, not looked on with favour at the Horse Guards, and after a court of inquiry had taken place, Colonel Dawkins chose to consider that Frederick Stephenson, who had taken part in the proceedings, had acted with prejudice and want of impartiality, and pestered him with offensive letters, trying in every way to fasten a quarrel on him. At last, not succeeding in getting any attention paid to him, he actually attempted to strike Stephenson as they met on the steps of a club in Pall Mall.

In former days such an insult could only have been met in one way, but Frederick Stephenson placed himself unreservedly in the hands of his friends Lord Abinger and General Gipps, and no such issue was permitted or advised. A civil action was instituted, and Colonel Dawkins made an apology, which, being accepted, the affair was closed.

In 1877 the London house was given up and his brother went to live in the country, while he for a time took lodgings in town ; but his love of a " home " made this very uncongenial to him, and he finally took a house in St. George's Square, S.W., where he invited his sisters to join him, and the three who still survived did so.

It is doubtful if he would have taken this step had he known what was in store for him. In 1883, a few months after he had settled upon this house, the command of the troops in Egypt was offered him, and for a time he hesitated as to whether he could accept it. Strong pressure was, however, brought to bear on him, the Duke of Cambridge, then Commander-in-Chief, urging him to go, and he finally consented, and left England in May 1883.

His own letters tell the story of his life in Egypt very clearly, though there are certain gaps and omissions which I am able to fill up through the great kindness of Colonel Romilly, who was A.D.C. to Sir Frederick,

and who has given me notes of his own, and letters from Sir Frederick, and advice and suggestions of the utmost value. It is not desirable here to go very deeply into the question of the route to Khartoum in connection with the relief of Gordon, a matter on which Sir Frederick differed from the home authorities, and which finally resulted in the appointment of Lord Wolseley in command of the expedition. It cannot, however, be passed over, and one fact must be emphasised—he never reported the Nile route impracticable, though he preferred the Berber route, and was strongly of opinion that in any case as much use as possible should be made of local craft and material. That he knew pretty well what he was talking about may be inferred from Lord Kitchener's words, who one day said in conversation that to his thinking " the man who knew more about the Soudan, its chiefs and tribes, and who had the closest and best views as to the way of dealing with them, was General Stephenson."

What really annoyed and distressed Sir Frederick in this business, as will be seen in one letter written to his brother, was that it should be thought possible that he would not carry out any plans finally decided on as faithfully as if they had been his own.

On April 25, 1884, Lord Hartington had written to him desiring him to report " on the measures which may be necessary for the relief (or removal) of General Gordon at Khartoum." Lord Hartington goes at some length into the question of the alternative measures that it may be necessary to take, and adds: " I must congratulate you on the very efficient arrangement made for the Suakin Expedition and on the complete military success which it accomplished." In the same letter he says: " I fancy that in the opinion of many here Lord Wolseley has underrated the difficulties of the Nile route, relying very much as he does on the experience, under different conditions, of the Red River Expedition. All former experience seems to point out the Suakin route."

The Duke of Cambridge also wrote previously to this on August 5: "The instructions sent are in very general terms. The general management will be left chiefly to your judgment whenever you are able to suggest how to carry on this delicate and difficult operation"; and on August 14: "You will receive the official dispatch from Secretary of State giving you all the necessary directions. I am glad to think that the whole conduct of this difficult operation is intended to be carried out under your directions."

After this it must have been something of a shock to receive a letter from Lord Hartington dated the 29th of August, only four days later than the one quoted above, explaining that the command of the expedition was to be taken out of Sir Frederick's hands. What Sir Frederick felt most was what he considered the want of confidence in him expressed in the words: "I also felt that it was unfair on you and on your staff to ask you to take the responsibility of the execution of a plan the details of which had perhaps not been sufficiently explained to you, but in which evidently you felt no confidence."

Sir Frederick's reply was short:—

"I beg to acknowledge your letter of the 29th last which has reached me by this mail, and I will ask your permission to reply to it at a later date. My object in writing to you to-day is to thank you for the kind and considerate manner in which you have been good enough to convey to me the decision of H.M.'s Government with regard to my supersession, a decision which, however painful it may be to my feelings, has at all events been softened by the very kind tone of your Lordship's letter."

A week later he writes again:—

"Since the date of my last letter Lord Wolseley has both spoken and written to me upon the subject of my present position in Egypt. The result of our communication has been my informing him that he might depend upon me for giving him all the support and assistance in my power, and that if my remaining

on here for the present would be of any service, I would do so as long as I could be of use during his stay in Egypt or the Soudan."

After this it is no matter of surprise that Sir Frederick wished to give up his command in Egypt, and much correspondence passed between him and the War Office and the Duke of Cambridge.

Great was the consternation when it was realised how near they were to losing so valuable a man from a post which he filled so entirely to the satisfaction of all, both in Egypt and at home. As usual, he set his own feelings aside and consented to remain on; and the following year, in July 1885, the Duke writes to him: "I feel the greatest satisfaction in having so able and judicious a general in command there [Egypt], who I flatter myself was mainly selected on my own recommendation." And again, in September of the same year: "I am deeply indebted to you for your admirable arrangements and for the manner in which you conduct your command, which is only what I always expected from you, but highly to your honour and credit."

During the early part of the command cholera had broken out in the district and caused grave apprehensions, and the letters refer to the disgraceful conduct of some of the Europeans in Alexandria at the time; but it is only from others that we learn what an important part Sir Frederick then took. He first of all made arrangements for scattering the troops in desert camps, only keeping a small garrison on the heights above the Citadel, and when diplomatic negotiations with the Egyptian Government failed to bring about the desired end of placing the town under military control, Sir Frederick on his own responsibility took over the entire management, and having done so, informed Sir Edward Malet, the British Minister, of the fact. This arbitrary but most successful action had to be covered by appointing him and Generals Baker and Evelyn Wood members of the Council of Ministers on cholera matters. It was no doubt due to his prompti-

tude that the loss in the British garrison did not exceed two per cent.

The General's house in Cairo was, it seems, the one place where the most violent opponents, foreign, native, or British, could meet together and for the time sink all differences of opinion. Colonel Romilly illustrates this by telling how Sir Frederick having in his keeping some Colours of the regiments that had gone up the Nile on service, used them to decorate his ball-room on one occasion. "Many French officials, naval officers, and visitors were invited, and Sir Frederick himself rearranged the folds of the Colours, that some of the proudly blazoned honours should not be too obviously flaunted before the eyes of sensitive foreign guests."

He received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament for his services in Egypt, and Lord Hartington when referring to them in his speech in the House of Commons was loudly cheered.

He was made a K.C.B., and after the battle of Giniss was advanced to the dignity of a G.C.B. He also received the Egyptian medal, the Khedive's bronze star, and the grand cross of the Medjidieh. Another very characteristic story is also told by Colonel Romilly. The Sultan wished to award him the Grand Cordon of the Osmanieh, and the insignia were actually presented by the Khedive; but Sir Frederick declined to accept them without receiving permission—for which he never would ask!

He also received a letter from the Duke of Cambridge:—

"*New Year's Day*, 1886.

"My dear Stephenson,—In wishing you all the compliments of the season on this the first of the year, I rejoice in being able to congratulate you on the great success you have had on the Nile, and your triumphant defeat of the Mahdists, with loss to them of spears, banners, and arms, besides heavy slaughter, and with comparatively slight loss to your own troops.

"The modesty with which you give the fullest justice to Grenfell and Butler does credit to your heart and to your high sense of honour; but though this may be as you state, I thank you for the admirable manner in which the operation has been carried out, and been brought to a successful issue. . . .—Yours most sincerely,

"GEORGE."

While referring to the appreciation shown of his services, it is not possible on the other hand to omit the very remarkable fact of no clasp being awarded for the battle of Giniss. There are letters from the War Office to Sir Frederick showing that not only in the opinion of those in authority there, but in that of the Duke of Cambridge himself, this engagement was considered too trifling, "a mere matter of outposts," to be so honoured. So that when a question was asked in the House, Campbell Bannerman gave the strange explanation that no clasp was given owing to the casualties being so small. "It is essential to have regard in some degree to the severity of the fighting."

Slight, however, as the actual fighting was in regard to the numbers of troops killed and wounded (only nine of the former and thirty-six of the latter on the British side), it was still a most important and decisive action, the Dervishes being completely routed, and pursued for fifty miles. This was at a time when any reverse might have had widespread and disastrous results, by encouraging the fanatical supporters of the Mahdi.

The admirable organisation of the expedition, with its perfect success and small loss, should, one would think, have been more specially noticed, instead of being denied the usual honour bestowed on such doings, when each man who helped to the good result can point to his clasp and say, "I too was there."

Of course, no one ever heard Sir Frederick refer to the matter,—all he used to say of the battle of Giniss

was that the entire success was due to General Grenfell, —but he felt the omission for the sake of his men.

Perhaps what gave him more pleasure than any honour conferred on him, on his return to Cairo after this expedition, was when—I quote from the *Times* of January 20, 1885—

"As Sir Frederick Stephenson's carriage passed the Kasr el Nil Barracks, the men of the Black Watch and of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry voluntarily turned out, lined the road on both sides, and vociferously cheered the General, who has acquired singular personal popularity with all ranks."

At the time of his leaving Egypt a letter was written to the *Spectator* of January 14, 1888, which I have permission to quote. It shows how deep was the affection for him of all classes and conditions during his five years' stay in the country.

From the "Spectator" of January 14, 1888

"General Stephenson in Egypt

"Sir,—Perhaps it may make the New Year a little happier to some of your readers if I, an Englishman, relate to Englishmen how faithfully and nobly one of our countrymen has been doing his duty and upholding his country's honour here in Egypt.

"General Sir Frederick Stephenson came among us in May 1883, to command the army of occupation. A month later we were facing the cholera. Amidst the absolute panic of the Greek and the Levantine, and the stolid indifference of the Moslem, it seemed a bad look out for our English lads. The Khedive and his Council were at Alexandria, and cut themselves off from all communication with the plague city. But our General was here. He did not abuse or despise anyone, but very soon he had organised a sanitary inspection such as this city had never had before. He divided the city into districts. He induced volun-

teers thoroughly to examine each district daily. Every night at ten o'clock they brought their reports to his house. Whatever sanitary measures were taken were due to his wise arrangements. The cholera left us, and a few months after the news of Hicks's defeat and slaughter fell like a thunderbolt among us. Then out came Gordon, and passed on to the South—steadfast, earnest, yet cheery. Then we heard how he was encompassed, and we thought surely England was not going to let him die away there in Khartoum. We could not conceive that our leaders would have thought more of the details of the redistribution of seats than of the national honour and of our hero in the Soudan. General Stephenson thought, as every thinking man in Egypt did, that the road to Khartoum was by the Red Sea and Suakin. The War Office knows best how often he wrote to them, how strongly he urged and implored that an expedition should be fitted out. He advocated the Suakin route, but when the Nile Valley route was preferred, and Lord Wolseley—a man much his junior—was sent to take the command over his head, who ever heard him grumble, or slack one hour in his efforts to smooth Lord Wolseley's way for him? Then came hot fightings,—Abou Klea and Kirbekan in the Nile Valley, Tamai and Teb on the Red Sea coast,—and Cairo was full of anxious little wives with their husbands at the front. They will not soon forget how kindly he went among them, how he cheered them and saw that they had the last information. And sweet and sympathising as he was, General Stephenson knew how to be stern and severe. When was there ever an army of occupation so thoroughly under discipline? When were any molested or insulted that he did not see them righted?

"And so the years passed on, and we all knew and loved our General in his own hospitable house, at our sports and races, at every social gathering, by the grave-side as one after another of us went to rest, with his white head bowed reverently in our church

on Sundays. He came among us at an age when most men are thinking about their ease at home. When it got hot in summer we went away to Europe ; but not so General Stephenson. Not a day was he off duty for four years, and he went home last summer only because his health required it.

" It was not only we English that loved him. All loved him. The spiteful little *Bosphore* had nothing to say against him. He has always been *un parfait gentilhomme*. We gave him a dinner the other day. Two hundred sat down, and about half were foreigners. He has been a political factor of the very highest value, tending more than anything we have done in Cairo to cast honour on the English name. Is it not something to be proud of, to gladden our New Year's Day, that we should have been able to show to the nations such an Englishman as this ? Somehow one does not expect simplicity and purity and unselfish kindness of heart, and unaffected interest in his fellow-men, from an old bachelor used to the Guards Club and the Albany, and to London fashionable life. But all these good qualities are to be found in Sir Frederick Stephenson. He gave up his command and left us yesterday. Oh ! be kind to him, my countrymen, when he gets home. He will perhaps never command an army again. Perhaps he is too old.

> ' O just and faithful knight of God,
> Ride on, the prize is near.'

So would say many in Cairo as well as yours truly,

" ANGLO-EGYPTIAN.

" CAIRO, *New Year's Day.*"

On his return from Egypt Sir Frederick settled down in his London home, and continued in the occupation of the same house until his death. The eldest of his unmarried sisters, known to many outside her own family as " Aunt Minnie," and to whom so many of his letters are addressed, was by this time advanced in years, having been born in 1808, and it is rather a

pathetic circumstance that now for the first time she realised the dream of her life—to keep house for her much-loved youngest brother. She lived to be ninety years old, and was even then a pretty and dainty old lady.

Sir Frederick always kept up the keenest interest in Egyptian affairs ; and it was not only the political and military outlook of the country that occupied his mind after he left Egypt, for its historical and artistic conditions were a constant source of pleasure, so it was with the anticipation of great enjoyment that he accepted an invitation from Lord and Lady Wantage to join them in a visit there in 1897. The visit was a great success, and the manner in which he was received, after nearly ten years' absence, touched him profoundly.

In Lady Wantage's memoir of her husband she says that " they reached Port Said on New Year's Day, accompanied by Lady Jane Lindsay and General Sir Frederick Stephenson, Lord Wantage's old friend and brother Guardsman, who gladly embraced this opportunity of revisiting a country where ten years before he had played a conspicuous part as Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Egypt during the early part of the campaign of 1886. He was received at Cairo with open arms by his old comrades, anxious to do homage to the gallant soldier who in days past had won the admiration and affection of all who served with him."

They went up the Nile in a steamer, and, says Lady Wantage, " on board the *Toski* the little *partie carrée* spent two happy months, steaming leisurely along, and landing at every place of interest."

With some difficulty they got permission to go as far as Wady Halfa, where Sir Archibald Hunter, who was then in command, received them and gave a review in their honour, and " on the morning of their departure a salute was fired by troops drawn up on the river bank, a parting homage to the veteran soldier who stood on deck as the vessel steamed northwards, bidding

farewell to the land he loved and to the last scenes of his bygone military career."

Lady Jane Lindsay, who was of the party, writes as follows :—

" In the close companionship of a journey to and through Egypt we got to know the General very intimately. To us his expressive face, so quick to betray amusement, disagreement, or enthusiasm, became an open book. His sense of the ludicrous and hearty laugh made him as delightful to live with as did his painstaking kindliness endear him as a fellow-traveller. His nature held a very charming mixture of boyish diffidence with the conscious dignity of high position, so that the honours frankly accorded him by the younger generation of military men in Egypt gave him a pleasure delightful to witness. Indeed, he possessed that generous type of character sometimes seen in the old, which regards the succeeding generations with an almost tender interest and admiration, believing in its value, its wisdom, honesty of purpose, and capacity to achieve, never chary of giving homage. And in Egypt during this journey he was reading the last chapter in a volume of history to which much of his own best work had contributed. He knew and remembered every aspect of the problems which had now, so many of them, been solved or were in process of being so ; consequently it may well be imagined how interesting was his companionship.

" The reception accorded him by all in authority must and did warm his heart, for its spontaneity—evincing affection from those personally known to him, and recognition of his past work for the country from those of more recent arrival—came like a concluding Amen on a life of dedication."

The journey up the Nile was not unattended by certain possibilities of attack from native tribes on the banks, and there was a strong military escort on board. After his return to England Lord Wantage wrote a letter to the *Times* calling attention to the state of

affairs, and his statements were called in question by Lord Farrer, who had made a similar journey earlier in the year. This drew forth a rejoinder from Sir Frederick, who on April 7, 1898, wrote :—

" To the Editor of the *Times*.

" Sir,—With reference to the recent correspondence which has appeared in the *Times* upon the Soudan advance, I should like to endorse every word contained in the admirable letter of Lord Wantage concerning the present insecurity of Egyptian territory. The statement in that letter quoted by Lord Farrer is strictly correct, and as I was myself upon the Nile between Assouan and Wady Halfa at the time when the insecure condition of the Upper Nile as stated by Lord Wantage existed, I can vouch for such having been the case.

" Lord Farrer in his comments upon that letter refers to his own experience between the 12th and 19th of January ; but dates are sometimes misleading, and such is the case in the present instance. Up to the latter date travellers were no doubt allowed to proceed on their journey between Assouan and Wady Halfa, but subsequently to that date, and in consequence of the assembly of a force of Dervishes, and their advance as far as Sarras, the banks of the Upper Nile were considered by the military authorities so insecure that travellers were forbidden to advance beyond Philæ, a restriction which remained in force until the intended movements of the Dervishes were more clearly ascertained.

" Now, Sir, it is not with this incident alone that we have to deal in considering the insecurity of Egyptian territory ; that state of insecurity has been chronic ever since the abandonment of the Soudan by Egypt at the instigation of England.

" The object which the late Mahdi had in view, which never left his mind, and which has been perpetuated

by his successor, the present so-called Khalifa, has been nothing less than the subjugation of Egypt. This has been proved by manifestos frequently issued by the late Mahdi inciting his followers to the capture of Cairo. These manifestos may have escaped the memory of some of your readers, but they are perfectly fresh in mine.

"As an earnest of these intentions, I will allude to the numerous raids and other acts of hostile aggression of a more serious nature which have been up to the present time directed against Egypt by the Dervishes. These instances are too numerous to be specified in detail, but I may call to mind the attacks made against Tokar, Sinkat, and Suakin itself, the assembly of a hostile force upon the Upper Nile at the end of 1885, the affair of Sarras in the spring of 1887, and the advance of a force as far as Toski. Since then the oasis of Kharghi was occupied by the Dervishes, who marched within measurable distance of Assiut.

"What appeals, however, most to our sympathies are the cruel raids which have been repeatedly made upon luckless villages upon the banks of the Nile, where the defenceless inhabitants have been slaughtered and plundered without mercy, notably in the very recent instance referred to by Lord Wantage, when a village was attacked at a distance of thirty miles north of Wady Halfa.

"In the face of these facts, how can anyone ignore the insecurity of Egyptian territory or the necessity of putting an end once and for all to this intolerable state of things? For until this truculent power is finally suppressed and the country it occupies restored to its former owners, there can never be that security and peace for Egypt which its well-wishers have at heart. —I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

"FREDERICK STEPHENSON, GENERAL.

"83 ST. GEORGE'S SQUARE, *April 7*."

The letter attracted considerable attention, but no

steps were taken to remedy the evil complained of before they were rendered unnecessary by Lord Kitchener's successful operations and the decisive battle of Omdurman in August 1898.

Of those events Sir Frederick writes in a letter to me dated September 13, 1898 :—

" You mention Kitchener's success upon the Upper Nile. It has been a glorious achievement, admirably conducted throughout, with first-rate ability, without fuss or bluster ; bringing his army some 200 miles by water and desert, and placing it in line in a trying climate in perfect order in front of his enemy, manœuvring it so ably on the battlefield, and finally annihilating the Dervishes, makes one feel proud of him as a General, and of the excellent behaviour of his forces, Egyptian as well as British. The whole campaign has given me intense pleasure, realising as it has done my hopes and longings for fourteen years. The problem arises as to the government of this vast territory, a task utterly beyond the capacity of such men as the Khedive and his Pashas. It must devolve upon England, and a Protectorate seems to me inevitable in the near future ; there are no doubt difficulties in the way, but none that are insurmountable to a firm hand and a good cause."

And in a letter written to Lady Wantage at the same time he says :—

" I am in raptures at Kitchener's success. He has done what I have been longing for for fourteen years. He has done his work admirably, and has shown ability of the highest order ; one cannot praise him too highly, and all who are interested in Egypt cannot be too grateful to him for what he has done. The massacre of the Dervishes has been frightful, but it could not be otherwise ; their annihilation was the only thing possible, and now that has been effectually done. . . . The future of this vast re-conquered territory is a question requiring grave consideration. Egypt now extends from north to south, as the crow flies, about 1100 miles, and its expansion still farther south is incomplete. Such a

vast territory is far beyond the capacity of such a man as the Khedive to govern, or of any native whose services he can command. This task can only be undertaken by England, so that we must without more ado assume a Protectorate and let the Khedive fall back to a position similar to that of a native prince in India ; it must come to that eventually.

" In the meantime administration in the south will have to be carried on under English superintendence in district provinces, such, for instance, as Wady Halfa, Dongola, New Berber, and Suakin (including Kassala), Khartoum being the seat of government for such portions of the Soudan as may be eventually re-annexed.

" I wonder if Kitchener would care to be Governor-General of the Soudan, with residence at Khartoum, with Wingate or Slatin serving under him. He must be a military man in the first instance, and well acquainted with native ways and feelings. I should enjoy of all things talking these matters over with you and Bob together with points connected with them which are of such surpassing interest.

" This Crete business is most serious ; everything falls upon us. Our little army does more useful work throughout the world than all the gigantic armies of Europe put together ; while ours is free to act, not one of theirs dares stir for fear of its neighbour."

The journey up the Nile was the last of Sir Frederick's foreign travels. He refused a later invitation from Lord and Lady Wantage, who again asked him to go abroad with them in 1898. The letter containing his refusal shows how much he would have liked to accept the invitation, but home ties and the business connected with his brother's death, which had just taken place, prevented his feeling himself at liberty to leave England at that time.

He kept up his interest in all that was going on around him, and had correspondents in all places where great events were taking place. During the Boer War (1899–1902) some of his most intimate friends

were in places of high command, notably Lord Methuen, whom he loved as a son, and Sir Archibald Hunter, for whom he had the highest esteem and admiration, and both of whom wrote to him fully and frequently, a correspondence which must be of the greatest possible interest, and which one day will no doubt be published, but the events are now too recent.

Sir Frederick's greatest enjoyment as age came on was to receive visits from friends such as these, with whom he could talk over past and present events. He had an immense circle of friends and acquaintances, who almost fought for the privilege of entertaining him, and could have spent his life visiting from house to house ; but gradually he gave up going about except to his most intimate friends, and the circle that surrounded him became a comparatively small one. One friendship he kept and enjoyed to the last hours of his life, that of Lady Wantage, who has written down some reminiscences of their intercourse during those many years for insertion in this memoir :—

" He was the truest and most faithful of friends—entering with hearty sympathy into all the joys, the sorrows, and the interests of our lives. As regards his own life, an almost over-sensitiveness of reserve held him back save in rare moments of confidence. He was the embodiment of the best type of an English gentleman and a soldier ; of any tinge of self-seeking he was absolutely devoid. At any moment he was ready to sacrifice his own interests or the success of his own career to the call of duty or of loyalty. His code of honour was a high one, but stern as could be his judgment, never have I heard him utter an ill-natured or unkind word, and always was he anxious to attribute to others the most charitable motives. No one could associate with him without feeling the ennobling and purifying influence of a character at once so simple and so great. He was a very frequent guest of ours at Lockinge, and for many years he spent Christmas with us, together with a small gathering of near relatives and close friends,

amongst his old fellow-Guardsmen, Colonel Haggarth, and frequently General Sir George Higginson and Sir Henry Brackenbury.

" In later days, when advancing age confined him to his London house, I very frequently visited him, and have a vivid picture of him in my memory, seated in his arm-chair by the dining-room table, books around him —well-read books, chiefly history and biography, together with works of thought on matters religious, political, and literary. His strong, earnest face would light up as I entered, greeting me with a cordial smile and a half-humorous twinkle of his eye, while, according to his habit, he rubbed his hands together in token of satisfaction. Then followed long talks—personal and public—and always was I struck with his eagerness and his capacity of taking in new ideas and modern modes of thought, rare in one of his age. My last recollection of him is a few weeks before his death, as he lay in his bed in the same room—books still on his pillow—calm, bright, and patient, his steadfast gaze fixed on the green trees and sunset sky seen through the open window, and his thoughts evidently fixed on the eternal glory so soon to be revealed to him."

The picture of Sir Frederick sitting in his dining-room is one all his friends will recognise. It was a special fancy inherited from his father, and nothing would persuade him to sit elsewhere, either in the drawing-room or in a study of his own. It had a peculiarly uncomfortable appearance, especially as he would never allow the servants to remove the cloth after luncheon, probably from a desire to save them trouble.

The trick of rubbing the hands together he had in common with his brother, and it always denoted pleasure in both of them ; sometimes, when accentuated, it implied a touch of mischief.

Both he and his brother had great social gifts very differently used. The elder disliked general society, though when he was with difficulty persuaded to accept

invitations he was usually the one who led conversation and to whom the rest were willing to listen. He conversed well and easily, was remarkably apt with anecdote or quotation, and could tell a story with that brevity which is not only the soul of wit but the joy of the listener. He had indeed a very ready wit of his own and a considerable fund of humour. His company was as much appreciated by the young as by his contemporaries, and his entrance amongst a party of young people was always greeted with acclamation, for instead of being *de trop*, his presence was apt to be an incentive to more lively fun.

The younger brother was fond of society and an immense favourite. It made no difference to him what sort of society he was in. He had nothing to conceal and nothing to change in his conduct, and was therefore quite un-self-conscious. No doubt this gave him the peculiar fascination of manner which attracted all he spoke to, even before they had an opportunity of judging his real character. He was essentially true, and felt the kindness he so readily expressed. Not that he felt kindly towards everyone indiscriminately by any means. He could be a severe judge, and meanness or untruth met with short shrift at his hands. In some ways he was easily imposed on, being unsuspicious and very slow to think evil. But he was a far keener observer of human nature than mere superficial onlookers would be led to think. One who knew him intimately for many years, and was close to him at a most important period of his life, has written very shrewdly : " Yet he was fully conscious of his own merits, and while unduly depreciating his own opinion, he appraised the gaudier and loudly expressed views of others at far less value than they could ever have suspected from the courteous attention given. He ' submitted ' his views too humbly, and did not ' assert ' them sufficiently to counteract the contentions of the un-squeamish. Keenly sensitive himself, he gave others credit for like fine feelings."

Frederick Stephenson was not such a brilliant talker as his brother William, not so quick, not so witty, but his conversation was full of charm and was equally cultivated and intelligent; his humour and sense of fun were very great.

Conversation between the two brothers was delightful to listen to, each drawing the other out to produce of his best. The younger was that most attractive of mortals, a sympathetic listener. The elder, on the contrary, was rather an impatient audience, liking you to be brief and pithy in your conversation, and was very quick to seize a point. An official with whom he had much intercourse at one time used to irritate him by a slow, deliberate, explanatory manner of speaking, often breaking off to say, "You follow me?" "Follow him!" said my father; "I was there long before he was!"

Both brothers were great readers, but widely different in their methods. The elder, though exceedingly careful and thorough, read with great rapidity, and formed his opinions on what he read quickly and decidedly, delighting to discuss what he had just finished. He kept up his taste for good fiction to the last, and it was surprising how late he would sometimes postpone his usual hour for going to bed if the fate of the heroine were hanging in the balance. The younger was, on the contrary, an exceedingly slow reader, and would compare passages, and ponder over them, and read portions over and over again, before he satisfied himself that he had mastered all that the writer intended to convey. Up to the last he could read (and without spectacles) his favourite authors and his newspaper Shakespeare he knew thoroughly and had constantly in his mind, so that apt quotations often illustrated his talk. Dickens was one of the few writers of fiction he would read in his old age, new works only appealing to him if either the author or the subject had some special personal attraction. Such books as Mrs. Ewing's *Jackanapes* delighted both brothers, but *Alice in*

Wonderland was a sealed book to them. What seemed too fantastic and fanciful repelled them.

As a young man Sir Frederick could write slight and amusing verses and stories, and in one of the latter, which unfortunately has been lost, he described his father under the guise of a German Baron of Romance. It was always said to be a most exact portrait, but all I can recollect is that the Baron wore Hessian boots, and that is a fact which a cousin still living perfectly remembers. Sir Benjamin was said to be the last man to wear them in England, with their little tassels hanging over the top of the boot in front.

Sir Frederick was fond of the society of young people and was an immense favourite with them, for his sympathy with their aspirations as with their weaknesses was always ready.

It will be remembered that on his brother's death he wrote to that brother's daughters that he hoped to be of use and comfort to them. "Try me," he said. This hope was amply fulfilled, for his three unmarried nieces went to live with him after the death of his eldest sister, which took place on the night after his brother's funeral. The arrangement was a happy one for all concerned. They kept house for him and made him a cheerful home, and were able to watch over his declining years and to soothe and comfort him at the last. What his society and protection were to them can readily be imagined.

Sir Frederick was very easy and pleasant to live with, and conversation with him was always delightful, for he would willingly discuss all sorts of subjects, social, political, or religious. Quite latterly, when new topics were fatiguing and when political disturbances depressed him, it was better to lead his mind back to the past, and many pleasant reminiscences resulted.

In politics he was always a strong Conservative, and the growing democratic tendency of the present day was a serious grief to him. Still, his courtesy to

those who differed from him and his attention to what they had to say on their side were unfailing.

Of his services it was difficult to make him talk freely, but once, when dining with only two or three other people, he gave a most stirring description of the storming of the heights of the Alma. The movements of the troops, the rush of the guns were pictured to his audience with a clearness of detail that showed all was as fresh in his mind as if the events had just occurred, though nearly thirty years had passed since that date. Then, in a few terribly explicit words, he described the battlefield *afterwards*. It was seldom indeed that he referred to the horrors of war, for his peculiarly wholesome and reasonable mind always avoided morbid details, but the few words he used then made an impression on his hearers not to be forgotten, and showed how deeply such things affected him.

His religious views and feelings were reverent, earnest, and very unconventional. He was fond of quoting the Psalms, especially the 19th, which, as he once said, " has got it all in a nutshell, my dear " ; and he hated gush or sentimentality on such a subject. People who did not know him might easily have been offended at his vehement rejection of what gave any appearance of being merely formal or outward in religious service, and on one or two occasions this may be observed in his letters.

When noticing his various tastes and peculiarities, it will not do to omit all mention of his love of music, which was considerable. Though never what could be called a serious musician, he loved good music, and was never tired of listening to his favourite oratorios, operas, and songs. Up to quite a late period of his life he was a constant attendant at certain of the Musical Festivals, especially those at Birmingham and Leeds, and he never failed to be present on at least two days of the Handel Festivals at the Crystal Palace, making up the same party of congenial friends time after time. In very early days he played the cornet, at a period when

it possessed a strange attraction as a solo instrument for the amateur in the drawing-room. He had a light and pretty tenor voice, and was fond of part-singing, being one of a small number of men who met in Henry Leslie's rooms in Conduit Street to sing glees under the direction of the man who was from this small beginning to develop later on the famous Henry Leslie Choir, which did so much for choral music.

In 1892 Frederick Stephenson had been appointed Colonel of the Coldstream Guards, a post he considered conferred great honour on him. In his speech to the regiment on the occasion of their inspection at Chelsea Barracks in May 1896 he said: "With regard to my own position here among you, I may say truly that Her Majesty has conferred on me the highest honour that an old soldier can attain, and one especially dear to an old Guardsman."

In 1898 he was made Constable of the Tower of London. This he greatly appreciated. He made himself thoroughly acquainted with all the history and traditions of the place, and was in constant touch with all that went on within its walls, continuing his personal visits long after he had given up going anywhere else. He was known and loved by all, high and low, and when on the occasion of his death it transpired that his own expressed wish was that there should be no military honours paid to him, and no show or fuss made, great disappointment was felt by the warders of the Tower at being unable to take any part in the funeral ceremony.

Ultimately it was found impossible to dispense with all display; the King himself commanded all naval and military officers to wear full uniform on the occasion, so the perfectly simple and private service that would have been Sir Frederick's own choice was given up, and warders from the Tower and soldiers from different regiments were there to do honour to the man they loved.

It was a wonderful sight. The church was packed with scarlet coats, and on each side of the coffin, with the Union Jack for its pall, stood three warders of the

Tower in their quaint full dress. Again by his own request " No flowers " had been inserted in the obituary notice, but it was no use; people would somehow express their feelings, and though not half of the wreaths that were sent could be used, a special choice was made, and all looked very bright and beautiful.

And on March 15, 1911, his death having taken place on the 10th, we stood by the grave of one of the best-loved men the world has ever seen.

Many letters and other expressions of affection and respect were received on all hands, and in the Regimental Orders of the Scots Guards of March 11, 1911, when his death was announced, are the words : " To the end his love and enthusiasm for and interest in all ranks of his old regiment were sustained, and no one ever had higher ideals or set a nobler example for all ranks to follow."

Some time before Sir Frederick's death Lord Wolseley had written of him: " A more devoted and gallant soldier, a more perfect gentleman or a better fellow, never breathed."

It is pleasant to realise that any jarring note that may have been struck between these two men was so completely brought into harmony before the end had come. In June 1909 Sir Frederick had written to Lady Wantage :—

" Thank you very much for letting me know the result of your visit to Lord Wolseley, as well as for telling me of the friendly remarks which he made on my behalf, which was very pleasant reading. He has run a very grand and remarkable career, raising himself without the help of any patronage, and exclusively by his own merits, from the humble position of subaltern to the high and honourable one of Commander-in-Chief. If he now suffers at all from the effects of highly strained energy and over-wrought brain power, they are the sacrifice which he makes to his country for the discharge of his duty to it. What a pattern and encouragement the study of his life is to any aspirant for military fame."

In a private letter Lord Cromer referred to "Stephenson's quiet, useful, but signally unostentatious life," and also said, "Sir Frederick Stephenson was one of the finest characters I have ever known." In reply to a request that a letter written to the *Times* might be used here, Lord Cromer says: "I shall be only too pleased if anything I have said will contribute to keep his memory green."

That letter will, I think, make a fitting end to this memoir.

From the "Times" of Monday, March 11, 1911

"The Late Sir F. Stephenson

"To the Editor of the *Times*.

"Sir,—Your issue of to-day contains the obituary notice of my old and honoured friend Sir Frederick Stephenson. Few officers, whether in the Civil or Military Services, have of recent years rendered more valuable, and I may add less ostentatious, service to their country than this very distinguished officer, whose qualities both of head and heart endeared him to all with whom he was brought in contact.

"I may perhaps be allowed to quote what I said on this subject in my work entitled *Modern Egypt* (vol. i. p. 420). Speaking of the great difficulties of the Egyptian situation in the early days of the occupation, I said:—

"'The behaviour and discipline of the British troops were alike excellent. Moreover, they were commanded by an officer (Sir Frederick Stephenson) who combined in a high degree all the qualities necessary to fill with advantage to his country a post of such exceptional difficulty as the command of an army of occupation in a foreign country. The French residents in Egypt resented the presence of a British army in their midst. They were in a state of nervous irritability, which rendered them prompt to take offence at the

smallest real or imaginary provocation. At any moment some paltry squabble might have occurred between the officers and soldiers of the army of occupation on the one hand and the population on the other hand, which, if any Frenchman had been concerned, might have caused much trouble. The general officer in command of the troops was thus called upon to exercise great tact, firmness, patience, and judgment. These qualities Sir Frederick Stephenson possessed in a high degree; it was largely due to him that such difficulties as arose never assumed proportions which it was beyond the resources of local diplomacy to settle satisfactorily. Sir Frederick Stephenson won for himself the admiration even of those who were most hostile to the British occupation. . . .'—I am, Sir, faithfully yours,

"CROMER.

"36 WIMPOLE STREET, W., *March* 11."

LETTERS FROM THE CRIMEA

PREFACE

These letters from the keen soldier who had been longing for active service, though they tell nothing new to students of history, are interesting from the human and individual outlook. They also tell the old story, the lesson never learned, that pluck and enthusiasm and belief in your cause will not bring success without preparation.

Just as in the days of the Boer War, forty years later, men talked of a " picnic " and a " walk over," so here going to the Crimea is referred to as " an agreeable tour." But that tone soon changes, and the writer regrets having used such an expression when he realises the terrible suffering which surrounds him on all hands. Many other letters must have been written which have not been preserved, and as an account of the Crimean campaign these are of course quite inadequate. That sad story has, however, been done full justice to elsewhere, while the details here written by a participant are so fresh and interesting that they are well worth reading.

Sir Frederick never mentions Miss Nightingale in his letters home, and may possibly at the time have shared in a certain military prejudice against " women in time of war " ; but later he grew to appreciate her great work, and in a letter written to Lady Wantage in 1910 says :—

" I have been thinking of you lately in connection with that grand character, Florence Nightingale, with

whose splendid career of usefulness, courage, and self-devotion you and Bob are so closely associated. What a grand creature she was, and what a noble life! Individually it makes one form a mean opinion of the useless life one has passed by the side of hers."

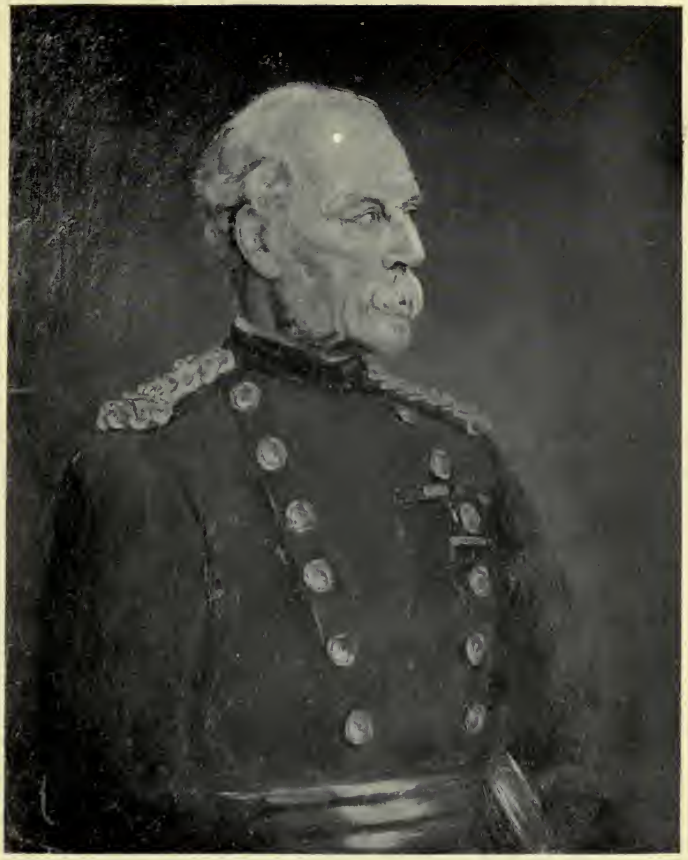
It has been remarked that some of the notes to these letters are quite superfluous, but writing as I am for a younger generation, I think many facts and names well known to some of us now will be forgotten by and by of places and people which not being thought of sufficient importance to figure in serious histories, are yet worthy of remembrance.

All facts and dates have been verified from such works as the *Greville Memoirs*, the *Life of the Prince Consort* by Theodore Martin, and *Nelson's Encyclopædia*, etc.

The break in the continuity of the Crimean letters was in consequence of the visit home rendered necessary by ill-health between the dates of August 7 and November 16, 1855.

H. A. P.

November 1914.



SIR F. C. A. STEPHENSON

(From an oil sketch by Lady Munro)

[*To face p.* 64

THE CRIMEA—1854–1856

To Lady Stephenson

[*No date.*]

My dear Mother,—We have just received the order to embark for foreign service on the 18th inst.—Saturday week; possibly we may not go till Monday 20th. I believe we go straight to Constantinople, but shall of course touch at Malta on our way—whether we go direct from thence to the Danube or not I cannot say. . . . Three battalions of Guards will go, consisting of 850 men each, and I shall be Brigade-Major, as I was at Chobham, the most charming appointment I could have. And so at last the great object and ambition of my life is about to be realised, and I am actually going on service. . . .—Ever your affectionate son,

Fredk. Stephenson.

Wellington Barracks, *Friday.*

To Lady Stephenson

On Board *Orinoco*, Mediterranean,
March 2, 1854.

My dear Mother,—As we expect to arrive at Malta the day after to-morrow (Saturday the 4th) I write you a few lines on board ship, as I expect to be too much occupied when we get on shore to enable me to write many letters then. We are now a little more than half-way between Gibraltar and Malta, and have had throughout the entire voyage the most calm and lovely weather it is possible to conceive. The Mediterranean is at this moment without a ripple, and it is so deliciously warm that at night I sleep with my port open. . . . The

people cheered us most lustily as we left the Dock, and the next morning as we passed the Needles we were as heartily cheered from Hurst Castle by a quantity of sailors, etc., who were on the look out for us there. The weather was so warm when we were off Cape Finisterre that we were lying on the deck basking in the sun ; we did not, however, see land until we were off Cape St. Vincent, which is a noble headland with a most forbidding aspect, and doubly interesting from its glorious associations. We kept land in view for some hours longer, and a great amusement it was making out the different farmhouses and towns we could see with our glasses. The next day at sunrise we were steaming through the Straits of Gibraltar. We did not land, however, at Gib., but had to content ourselves with a distant view of it. It is difficult to say which is the finest coast, that of Europe or of Africa. The beautiful bold mountain on the African coast, Apis Hill, with the Bay of Ceuta beyond, is very lovely, but perhaps does not quite equal the view on the opposite shore, where there is so much interest attached to its other charms. We saw it all under most favourable circumstances, for by entering the Straits before sunrise we were enabled to witness the gradual lighting up of the whole scene, which became more and more enchanting as each additional ray of the sun revealed some fresh beauty, until as we were well past the Rock the light upon the white cliffs was quite dazzling. Here we are now after one of the most charming and successful passages it is possible to conceive, quietly gliding through this lovely lake between Algiers and Bona, the African coast dimly visible. We are now anxiously looking forward to landing, so as to hear what news has transpired since we left England. Lord Raglan [1] will arrive somewhere about the 24th, when I suppose we shall start immediately for our unknown destination. When you write send me plenty of news, for at Malta we get none but what comes from England. Nothing can exceed the

[1] Figures refer to the notes at the end of each section.

health and spirits of all on board, and what is better still, their eagerness to be at work. I shall leave a little space at the bottom in case I have time to add a few lines after seeing Ella and Isabella [2] (imagine what a meeting !). And now God bless you, my dear mother. Give my best love to the girls, and believe me ever your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

FORT MANUEL, *March* 16.

MY DEAR MOTHER,— . . . I can now tell you more about our proceedings, which in a military point of view have not as yet been of much importance. Regiments are constantly arriving here in all sorts of steamers, both Government and private company's ; our own Brigade is, however, not yet complete, my battalion not having arrived; the *Simoom* which brings her having broken down at Gibraltar, she will not be here under seventeen or eighteen days' passage. We took only half, viz. nine, but then we came in a private steamer. The climate here is quite perfection just at present, but I should not like to pass a summer here : there is no country, not a tree to be seen, except the locust tree, which is in every respect like the ilex, and what little green there happens to be from new vegetation is almost entirely hid from the eye by the numerous stone walls which enclose the tiny little fields. The general lay of the island is slightly undulating, hilly you can hardly call it, and its appearance is like a mass of loose stones and rock, studded here and there with the locust trees, but very thickly covered with villages. . . . When we are to go farther on Heaven only knows.—Your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother, William Henry Stephenson

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—I have been in daily hopes for the last three weeks of being able to write and say we are off to-morrow, but here we are still, though all

the rest of the force, except two companies of the 49th, have been at Gallipoli some days, and the Rifles with Sir G. Brown [3] more than a week ; however, Lord Raglan is expected here Monday night, and on the following day I really do think we shall be off. You know in England so much more of what is going on than we do here, that I hardly know what to tell you about, for all our news relating to Turkey comes to us from you. The peninsula to the north-west of the Dardanelles is, as I suppose you know, to be fortified about 10 miles north of Gallipoli to serve as a left base to our operations, and to protect the passage of the Dardanelles ; our right base will be Constantinople, I believe, and in order to protect that as well as the Bosphorus, a fortified line will be thrown up some 30 or 40 miles in front of the capital. The extent of this line as chosen by Sir J. Burgoyne [4] will be nearly 30 miles, but along its front are several small lakes, marshy ground, etc., impassable to an enemy, so that the actual extent to be defended will not exceed 9 miles. The whole of the force has gone to Gallipoli, but I cannot help thinking that our Brigade will go to Constantinople. Lord Stratford [5] sent last week to Sir W. Reid [6] to dispatch troops immediately to Constantinople ; our Brigade were the only troops left here undisposed of, but he could not send us, as he had only the day before received orders from England to send on all the troops but ourselves—this is why I think we shall be sent on there when Lord Raglan arrives. I hope we may. Ella,[7] who returned from there a week ago, says that all the Greeks are being driven from the town, and later accounts say that fears of a disturbance are entertained at the anticipated enfranchisement of the Christians. These circumstances, together with the presence of great numbers of irregular troops in the town who came out from Asia when the Sultan made his appeal to all true believers at the commencement of hostilities, and who are now committing all sorts of excesses ; all these

circumstances will account for Lord Stratford's anxiety to have some troops of his own at Constantinople. This arrangement will be in every respect more agreeable, inasmuch as no base has been established as yet at Gallipoli, Malta serving as such for the present, where we should hope to have all our stores, reserve ammunition, etc. etc. Between you and me, I do not think matters have been well arranged at the Horse Guards. Excepting the Guards, no brigade has been put together as yet. Hardly any of the Staff have come out, although the whole of the infantry of the Expeditionary Force has not only been at Malta for some considerable time, but has actually gone on to the seat of war, leaving their Brigadier-Generals and Staff to follow them at some later time, instead of those officers being the first to land and superintend the disembarking and first settling down in a foreign land of their respective brigades. Some 15,000 troops are now at Gallipoli, not brigaded, and with the exception of Sir George Brown and a staff of five officers, there is only one Brigadier-General (besides the Colonel of Engineers) to look after them all. I cannot tell you how we all long to be off, and how we look forward to Lord Raglan's arrival to have our forces arranged and handled by a true master hand. There were reports at first that the neighbourhood of Gallipoli was deficient in wood and water, but from a letter I have seen from Lady Erroll (who intends accompanying her husband in the Rifles all through the campaign) there is an ample supply of both, wood being procured from Asia, as there is not a tree hardly in the whole peninsula. The French have been beforehand with us in landing in Turkey ; before our Rifles started, some 5000 or 6000 French had already gone on. All their ships conveying troops have touched here on their way to coal, chiefly as yet from Algeria. I should think nearly 20,000 were landed in Turkey already. Our troops here are in admirable health and spirits, though a little bored at remaining so long

inactive. They are conducting themselves in the most exemplary manner. Ella's trip to Constantinople was very successful; she saw Henry there for three days, and remained out altogether twelve days, which enabled her to see a great deal, and derive immense pleasure from her visit. I have been quite delighted with this island, and from having been here so long with little to do, have had opportunities of seeing it in a manner which does not fall to the lot of ordinary tourists. Last week, four of us made a complete tour of Malta and Gozo; we took a dragoman with us and two mules, on which latter we placed a tent and our kettles and eatables. We remained about four days and completely explored the island, sleeping under our tent at night, and cooking our dinner ourselves; lying down early, and being up with tent packed ready to start soon after sunrise. There are very beautiful spots to be seen, and a very great deal to interest one, which can only be seen in the way we saw it. A more priest-ridden spot does not exist on the face of the earth, consequently the island is covered with churches, most of them very handsome. The utter absence of trees is very remarkable, you hardly see such a thing; and considering Malta's celebrity for oranges, it is a singular fact that, with the exception of two small groves, there is not an orange tree visible, the gardens being all surrounded by walls to protect them from the sea-breeze. Valetta is one of the cleanest, most picturesque towns I have seen, and the view of the Grand Harbour, upon which you can look down to a depth of 200 or 300 feet from certain parts of the town, with its numerous forts, is probably as fine as any of its kind in the world. I hope my next letter will be of a more interesting nature than this one, and that it may contain some account of our active proceedings, which seem to me to have been sadly delayed. Give my kindest and best love to Julia,[8] and tell her I am often thinking of her and all the dear girls. . . . An Illustrated News would now and then be very

acceptable. . . . I hope Mr. Hamilton[9] is well; pray remember me to him, and offer him my congratulations upon the appointment of the new Bishop of Salisbury.[10] What pleasure it must have given you all! And now, God bless you, my dear William, and think sometimes of your affectionate brother,

FREDERICK.

61 STRADA BRITANNICA, *April* 15, 1854.

CAMP SCUTARI, *May* 9, 1854.

MY DEAR MOTHER,— . . . Our Brigade left Malta on the morning of the 22nd, each battalion in a separate steamer. The weather was stormy and the sea uncommonly rough; almost everybody, including myself, ill. The next day, Sunday, it calmed a little, but on Monday morning very early we found ourselves in a thick fog and knew we were close to Cape Matapan, the point for which we were steering. Suddenly we found ourselves close to a rock; you might have thrown a biscuit on it, we were so near on our larboard bow. The captain called out as loud as he could to the helmsman, "Port your helm," but in the confusion the stupid fellow put it a-starboard, which, as you may conceive, did not improve matters. However, the speed was instantly slackened, and we got by all safe, but I assure you a narrower escape mortal man never had. It turned out that our course was so correct that we were steering right upon one of the rocks of the Cape; but almost everyone on board thought it was all over, and one or two had already thrown aside their greatcoats to be ready for a swim. I was dressing at the time, and was no little surprised at seeing the porthole of my cabin suddenly obscured and this pleasant little rock looking in to see how I was getting on. About midday the fog cleared and we had a good view of the coast of Greece. We steered south of Cerigo, and within two or three miles of it, a beautiful coast but rather a barren island, beautified, however, by the British flag which was flying over the fort. We had a capital view of the snowy mountains

of Candia, and in the morning found ourselves off the Isthmus of Corinth and Athens, the archipelago as calm as a pond. The next day we were off Troy, passing within the island of Tenedos; saw the tombs of Patroclus and Ajax, and entering Besika Bay passed by a French line-of-battle ship and a French frigate full of troops. To the latter, which was rather far off, we only dipped our colours, but we steered purposely right under the bows of the other and gave her three such cheers as must have roused the sleeping heroes of Troy. We now entered the Dardanelles; but the sun was already down, and excepting the castles of Europe and Asia, it was too dark to see anything of the Straits, narrow as they are. About midnight we anchored off Gallipoli, and immediately went on shore to report ourselves to Sir George Brown. It was then I touched Turkish soil for the first time! The impressions made by landing in a foreign country for the first time are always striking, but in a country so distant and so foreign in its manners, dress, religion, and in short everything, it was more so than usual, especially as it was a very dark night, our lanterns serving as our only guides. We groped our way in single file till we discovered an English guard-room, and took one of the men as a guide. A little farther on we came to a small French camp, and eventually arrived at the General's, whom we found in bed. We then returned on board; as we were not to sail till the following morning, we had a whole day to ourselves to see the town and the works they are throwing up. The latter are about eight or nine miles up the peninsula; they are three miles in extent and reach from the Gulf of Saros to the Sea of Marmora, and are to be thrown up half by the English and half by the French. The walk was a very interesting one, first owing to the scenery, which was lovely, and secondly to the numerous camps lying right and left—here English, there French—dotted about according to the supply of water. In the midst of the Rifles camp was a green marquee, the habitation of Lady Erroll,[11] who intends

to accompany her husband, a captain in the Rifles, all through the campaign. Poor thing, she little knows what is before her! The Rifles have, however, just arrived here from Gallipoli, so that for the present at least she will be under a roof again. . . . We are encamped upon the Adriatic side, about a mile and a half from Scutari, upon some high grass-land commanding the most beautiful views you can conceive: on one side Stamboul and the Sea of Marmora, and in our rear the Princes Island, with Mount Olympus covered with snow in the distance; in our front is the high road to Broussa, with a long straggling burial-ground on either side filled with lofty cypress trees. Along the road have been passing constantly hordes of irregular cavalry, hurrying from the depths of Asia to the banks of the Danube—the wildest and most picturesque set of devils you can conceive. Their music consists of two tom-toms about the size of a battledore, which those who play them accompany with the most hideous yelling. As troops [*they are*] the most useless and lawless set of fellows conceivable, fit for nothing but plunder. . . . I do not think we shall move up the country before the end of the month; only half the artillery is arrived, no cavalry, and the commissariat almost entirely unprovided with means of transport. Our division, commanded by the Duke of Cambridge,[12] consists of the Guards under General Bentinck,[13] and the Highland Brigade (viz. 42nd, 79th, and 93rd) under Sir Colin Campbell [14]—imagine the noble sight we shall be when we are all put together! The 93rd are just arrived from Gallipoli, the 79th will follow shortly. I have been very well and, what is more, very happy; have plenty to do, and am busy all day long. Mrs. Scott has just arrived to keep her husband company; Lady Erroll is also arrived, the Rifles having left Gallipoli—she says she cannot make up her mind to live in a tent again. . . . God bless you, my dear mother.—With love to all, your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother-in-Law, Melvil Wilson

CAMP SCUTARI, *May* 10, 1854.

MY DEAR MELVIL,—I ought to have written to you long ago to tell you all about my proceedings and also to inquire about your own, but you know my weakness in letter-writing, and so I trust to your indulgence. I had a most delightful stay at Malta, and made the most of my time ; it was too delightful to find a home in that retired spot, and you may judge of the delight I felt in meeting Ella out there under such circumstances. Our Brigade was the last to leave the island although the first to arrive, and after having been deuced nearly run upon a rock off Cape Matapan, have arrived in safety at Scutari, where the bulk of our force now is. About 2500 are in barracks and about 9000 encamped on a lovely piece of ground outside the town ; some artillery are in barracks about five miles up the Bosphorus, and there are about 4000 still left at Gallipoli to throw up works. None of the cavalry is yet arrived and not half of the artillery, and I do not think we shall move for the next month. When we proceed to business I have not the slightest idea ; you will probably know better than I do. I think, after all, there is a very good chance of our having no fighting—what do you think ? I wish, if you had a spare moment, you would write me a few lines telling me what you think of the state of things. What are Prussia and Austria going to do ? Nothing whatever appears to be going on along the Danube ; both Russians and Turks are completely inactive. . . . It seems to me unnatural to be making this agreeable tour without you and the girls ; but however much you might like to travel here, it is not a country for ladies to make tours in. I have seen little or nothing of Stamboul or the country about, but directly I have I shall write a full account to Paris of everything worth mentioning. The Duke of Cambridge is just arrived ; he commands one division, consisting of the Brigade of Guards and the Highland Brigade

(the 22nd, 79th, and 93rd); imagine what a splendid sight they will be when deployed into line, they will occupy very nearly one mile in extent. Cavalry and guns will, I suppose, be added to us when they arrive. Officers and men are in first-rate health and spirits, and longing to move to the front. The 93rd gave three cheers when they heard they were to be in the same Division with ourselves (the other two Highland regiments have not arrived), and our own satisfaction was equal;—such troops animated by such good feeling must carry everything before them. How you would like to see our encampment! It is really a beautiful sight and occupies such a beautiful spot! and almost every day small hordes of Bashi-Bazouks, the irregular cavalry [?*pass by*], wild, picturesque-looking rascals, but I should think worse than useless. The officers get very fair shooting, they find plenty of quail, which come very handy to the pot; some have gone inland on a four days' excursion, and expect to get deer and wild boars. I am afraid I shall not be able to take very far trips myself, if any; it is all I can do to get away from camp even for a walk, but there is nothing like having plenty to do. Write to me soon, it will give me such pleasure to hear from you. Give my best and kindest love to dear Lou [15] (don't forget), and to all the girls. I hope Rivers [16] is well again. God bless you, my dear Melvil.—Ever yours affectionately,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother, William Henry Stephenson

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . The allied army is, I think, now on the verge of commencing active operations. Lord Raglan, in company with Marshal St. Arnaud,[17] General Tylden commanding the engineers, General Cator commanding the artillery, and his military secretary, Steele of the Coldstreams, start for Varna next Thursday, the 18th. They will there hold a council of war and decide upon attacking the Russians at once,

either in the Dobrutska or at Sebastopol ; they will only remain there twenty-four hours, and then return straight to Scutari. I think we shall move very shortly after their return, much to everybody's delight ; we are all most anxious to go forward, as you may well imagine. We shall move to Varna by sea, as there is plenty of tonnage in those waters, and make that the base of our operations. I heard Baraguay d'Hilliers [18] say the other day that their force in the East was 29,000 ; our own is, or will be in a day or two, 26,000. The men and officers are in the best health and highest spirits, longing to be on the move. Our camp is formed on the most lovely piece of ground you can imagine, with an excellent view of Constantinople, the Princes Islands, which are perfectly beautiful, and Olympus in the distance covered with snow. On another side is the high road to Broussa, on each side of which is the great Turkish burial-ground, extremely picturesque with its beautiful tall cypress trees and the quaint tombstones topped with fezes painted—the retreat of the plaintive bulbul, which forms at night with the braying and neighing of the baggage-mules and bât horses, the croaking of the frogs, and the howling of the scavenger dogs, the most charming soporific you can imagine. I have been so tied by the leg that I have only once been able to get leave to see Stamboul and the Valley of Sweet Waters. Pera and Galata I have not seen, and probably never shall. I have managed to get away for one day, when, having procured a firman, thirty-two of us started in a body and visited the two great mosques Achmet and St. Sophia, and most beautiful they are ; but I do not mean to bore you with a description of them. The religious duties going on inside were as amusing as they were interesting. The seraglio we were all immensely disappointed in, seeing it was dispelling a romantic delusion, a disagreeable operation for sightseers. Stamboul itself is more filthy and stinking than anything you can imagine—the Spanish proverb, " See Seville and die," is more applicable to Constantinople (in a

contrary sense !). We rowed up the Golden Horn to the Valley of Sweet Waters afterwards, and a most charming trip it was ; all Constantinople was congregated there. A more picturesque and charming scene it is impossible to imagine ;—the beautiful dresses ; groups of Turks squatting on the ground smoking, clustered round a tree by the water-side ; women in detached groups squatting by themselves, dressed in the brightest colours and veiled up to the eyes ; now and then a stately old Pasha, sitting in a carriage all by himself, moved by at a slow, dignified pace, followed by three or four carriages containing his harem with an argus-eyed eunuch at each door,—all this scene enlivened by tom-toms, guitars, and funny little fiddles played like violoncellos playing the wildest and most discordant music possible, the musicians howling rather than singing by way of accompaniment. I was determined to pass the day in true Eastern style ; so buying a small roll, I approached a stall and ate some most delicious kabobs with my fingers, which I washed down with sherbet (the nastiest stuff you ever drank). I then regaled myself with sweetmeats, which are excellent, and finished my repast with a chibouk and coffee, so that altogether I made the most of my day. I do not, however, much regret my confinement to camp, the spot is so lovely, and the walks in the neighbourhood lovely. I hope you are all getting on well in Bolton Row ;[19] give my kindest love to Julia and the children, and tell them I often think of them. . . . —Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

CAMP SCUTARI, *May* 15, 1854.

To Mrs. Melvil Wilson

CAMP SCUTARI, *May* 25, 1854.

MY DEAREST LOU,—It is a sad long time since I have written to you, but do not think for all that that I have in any way forgotten you, for I assure you I am

constantly thinking of you and all at the Rue las Cases. This life is so full of excitement and my time is so occupied that it is really no easy matter to give up a few hours to letter-writing, even to those dearest to me. We are now in camp at Scutari. . . . We have a lovely view . . . which often makes me think of Switzerland. Our position is really quite lovely, and although there is an enormous barrack close by capable of holding 7000 men, I am very glad it did not fall to our lot to be quartered there. It is a fine imposing building, but the filth and stench of the rooms is beyond description, and it swarms with fleas. I had a good view of Stamboul the other day, and visited two of the principal mosques and the seraglio, all of which we had to enter bare-footed ; it looked so ridiculous to see a party of thirty men (which we were) walking about the mosque each with a pair of Wellington boots in his hand. These mosques are very beautiful buildings ; their vast space is very striking, nothing to interrupt the view ; the form is that of a Greek cross, and the cupola in the centre is quite enormous. The one in the Achmet Mosque is supported by four of the most gigantic pillars in the world ; it took me twenty-eight good long strides to walk round one. There is not a chair, stool, or bench visible, and the whole surface of the floor is covered with numberless Turkey carpets, more beautiful than any I have ever seen—so deliciously soft to walk upon. The quaint little pulpit from which the Koran is read is the only excrescence of any kind in the building. St. Sophia is more interesting still. We were stopped at the outer gate till our firman was viséd. At this gate a chain is thrown across at midday ; up to this hour the lazy Turks are allowed to ride through the inner court to the door of the mosque, after which hour those wishing to go to church must dismount at the outer gate. The architecture of this mosque, which was built by Justinian, is perfectly splendid ; there are numberless large pillars, each of one single block of stone and of different kinds ; marbles of all

hues from Marmora and the Bosphorus, red granite from Egypt, porphyry from Asia, etc., most of them brought from Greek temples in Asia Minor ; the whole effect, however, is very much marred by adhering to a punctilio in Mussulman rites. It is, as you know, the custom in mosques for the pulpit and altar to point towards Mecca ; the direction of Mecca is south-east of the original altar, the chancel in short, therefore the raised dais, which is of considerable extent, and on which the altar stands, runs diagonally right across the mosque, making the whole building look askew. I must now finish my description, for since writing the above I have heard the sad news of poor Henry Giffard and his ship. In case you have not, I will tell you in a few hurried words the whole history. After the bombardment of Odessa, the fleet cruised off the neighbourhood ; a heavy fog came on, and lasted sixteen days, so dense the men could not see the bowsprit ends of their own ships, and the Admiral actually fired away two tons of powder in signals to keep his fleet together. In this fog the *Tiger* got ashore ; poor Henry, in order to lighten her, threw all his guns but one overboard, and set his boats adrift ; in another half-hour they expected to get her off, when the fog suddenly cleared, and they found themselves close to a battery with troops drawn up ready to receive them. The battery opened upon them. Henry replied with his one gun, but to no effect ; the first shot from the Russians carried off one of his legs and wounded the other, killing a middy, his relation, by his side ; nothing was left for the crew but to surrender themselves prisoners of war. Two frigates came up afterwards, but although they have done their best towards burning the *Tiger*, so as to prevent her falling into the enemy's hands, they were unable to do anything else. The *Retribution* sent a flag of truce on shore, and the crew of the boat carrying it remained some time with the prisoners. They say they were all most kindly treated, and nothing could exceed the attention of Madame Osten-Sacken to Henry ; she is the wife of the

Commandant of Odessa, and Henry is staying in his house. His other leg is injured, poor fellow, and it is doubtful whether he will lose it also or not. What a shock for poor Ella! I do not know what she will do. If the Russians will exchange prisoners with us well and good, otherwise what will she do, poor thing? With regard to our own movements, the Light Division move up to Varna on Saturday with Lord Raglan; our own Division, consisting of the Highlanders (42nd, 79th, and 93rd) and a battery of guns, move up on Tuesday; the rest follow as soon as possible. The French are on the move also, but we shall be in the field before them; our cavalry will move forward directly they march. The Russians have invested Silistria, and are evidently doing their best to take it before the Allies come up. Lord Raglan has just received a dispatch from Omar Pasha,[20] reporting that the enemy have made two attacks upon the town and have been twice repulsed; if they take it eventually, we shall have to retake it; if they do not take it before we come up, there must be a general action in two or three weeks from now. Silistria is the strategical point contended for at present, and a most important one it is. What a scandalous affair this is about the King and Queen of Greece![21] their reign is at an end, however, but who is to replace them? . . . —Ever, my dear Lou, your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

CAMP SCUTARI, *May* 30, 1854.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—You have, of course, long ago heard the sad news of poor Henry. . . . Instead of your receiving better accounts, you will, I am sorry to say, have to read worse. An officer of our Brigade returned from Varna yesterday, where he met all the Fleet except the flying squadron, and then he had the worst possible accounts of poor dear Henry; mortification had set in, and there were no hopes. I hope my

poor dear mother and all my sisters will bear this sad shock with all the fortitude and resignation that can be expected. Poor Ella ! it is a sad honour for her to have been the first called upon to make a sacrifice for the dear old country. There is nothing to be said more. He has done his duty, and may he meet his reward. The regrets in the Fleet are deep in the greatest degree ; he was universally loved, and nothing can be more gratifying than the terms in which I hear him spoken of. The officers of the Fleet consider the bad turn his wound has taken to be owing partly to a previous bad state of health, but principally to his distress of mind at losing his ship, although not the slightest particle of blame is attached to any individual in the ship. The regrets of the Fleet—for they unwillingly allude to the subject—are entirely out of respect to his sufferings, mental and bodily, on the occasion.

Our Light Division under Sir G. Brown sailed for Varna yesterday ; our Division goes next, under the Duke of Cambridge. As soon as the transports return, which will be about the latter end of this week, the 2nd or 3rd of June, the army will encamp near a place called Devna or Devina, at the head of a small lake of that name, close to Varna—you will probably see it in my large Atlas. When the allied army is concentrated we shall advance to attack the enemy. I told William in my last that we shall march to relieve Silistria ; since then I have heard that we shall march to Trajan's Wall, in front of which the Russians are entrenched. I promise you we will give a good account of the Russians whenever we do meet them, for nothing can exceed the good state, mental and bodily, our troops are in, and their anxiety to be moving. This letter will be a dull and stupid one, but I feel poor Henry's loss too much to be able to send you amusing descriptions of all I see. . . . And now God bless you, my dear mother. I am in the best health, and except for this news from the Black Sea in the highest spirits.—Ever your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

CAMP SCUTARI, *June* 5, 1854.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Our departure from Scutari is postponed, but I think only for a few days. The fact is, we are unprovided with baggage animals, and until the Commissariat furnish them we should not be able to move up to the Danube, even if we were sent to Varna. The Light Division, which moved up a week ago, had to borrow 150 animals from Omar Pasha, when they disembarked to carry their reserve ammunition to their camp. Two officers from each battalion of our Brigade have been sent by Lord Raglan to scour the neighbouring country, and try and buy as many horses as they can. This is properly the duty of the Commissariat, but whether the neglect is their fault or that of the Government for not sending that department out here sooner, is more than I can tell. Lord Raglan goes up to Varna again to-day, and will return in a day or two. Omar Pasha sent him a special courier two or three days ago to announce that the Russians in attempting to storm Silistria or its outworks had been repulsed with heavy loss, and that there was now free communication with that town. You get news in England concerning this war with so much more certainty than we do, that anything I can tell you may be no news at all; but there is apparently great uncertainty as to our movements, owing, I imagine, to the following reasons: first and foremost, we are not prepared to move from want of guns, cavalry, and baggage animals; secondly, I believe that the Russians are dying away like rotten sheep in the Dobrutska, and if so we cannot do better than let them alone; and lastly, Austria and even Sweden seem to be coming over to our side, and perhaps we are waiting till something more decided is settled on that point. I walked the other day round the walls of Constantinople from the Seven Towers on the Sea of Marmora

to the Golden Horn. This side of the town, about 3½ miles in extent, is protected by the most interesting and beautiful object of antiquity to be seen anywhere. It consists of a triple wall, in many places quite perfect, each rising higher than the one in front of it, castellated and strengthened by numerous towers, some overgrown with ivy, others covered with trees and partially in ruins. These walls, protected by a ditch, were partially built by Constantine, and are probably the most perfect specimen extant of the fortifications of those days. The date of this work, the old Latin and Greek inscriptions over its many beautiful gateways, the fine marble pillars and slabs used in their construction, and the ruined portions of it covered with ivy, make it one of the most beautiful objects I have ever seen. I have heard no news from Odessa of a positive nature; as soon as I do, of course I will let you know. I am very anxious to hear from you since my last letter, and to know how poor Ella bears this awful shock. I have never yet congratulated you upon your apartments at Hampton Court,[22] which I do now with all my heart; give me a good long account of them when you write, it made me so happy when I heard of your good luck.—Your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

SCUTARI, *June* 10, 1854.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Mr. Lloyd called upon me last Tuesday and brought me your packet, for which I am very much obliged both to him and you. From Malta he had poor Ella as a companion, and brought me a note from her. I went down to the harbour as soon as possible, but she was already gone up to the Black Sea in the *Vesuvius*. I am afraid she will not get to Odessa in time to find poor Henry alive; the accounts I hear of him are very bad, and from all I can gather it is the amputated leg that will kill him, mortification having set in.

Mr. Lloyd said that Ella was the admiration of all on board, for the pluck she showed and for the noble manner in which she faced her misfortunes. That is quite like her, she is really a noble character ; nothing could be more affecting than her letter to me, for in it she talks of an exchange of prisoners, and then how she intends taking Henry home to nurse him. The captain of the *Caradoc* also spoke of her in such high terms (she went on board his vessel on first arriving at Constantinople, thinking he was going off immediately to the Black Sea), and said she was in capital spirits. I long for more news of her, and more especially to see her ; it was very unlucky for me missing her last Tuesday. We are still quietly reposing in our camp at Scutari, and I know of nothing which can lead me to think we are likely soon to enter upon active operations. The utmost that I hear of is that we may move to another encamping-ground a few miles up the Bosphorus. Our army will be quite ready to take the field in fourteen days. All the cavalry and artillery will then be out, but the French are sadly behindhand, and Heaven only knows when they will be ready. If we do not begin work in three weeks from now it will be entirely their fault. I suppose you heard of the last repulse of the Russians from Silistria ; it was entirely owing to two Englishmen, a man named Nasmyth in the Indian army (I believe a correspondent of the *Times*) and another officer in the Ceylon Rifles. The Governor of Silistria placed the whole disposition of his troops in their hands, and Omar Pasha writes to Lord Raglan in the highest terms of them. The next news from the town is looked forward to with great anxiety, for a very strong reconnaissance is to be made from there to ascertain the real state of the Russian force. There is a vast track of wooded country running south of Silistria and parallel with the Danube ; some 1500 cavalry will be thrown into this forest and operate on the enemy's flank to gain information. This party will be under the control of Lieutenant Nasmyth, who they say has already

shown first-rate military talent. Another reconnoitring party, under Major Sir T. Trowbridge,[23] of the 7th Fusiliers, is also being made in the direction of Trajan's Wall, so that we shall shortly get more authentic information, I hope, about the enemy. We do so long to be at them, but Heaven only knows when that will be. We are all, as usual, in first-rate health and spirits. We have hardly any sick, and though our strength is half as much again as when in London we have fewer sick. Our men and officers are now in full enjoyment of the porter, tea, sugar, etc. etc., which the Government have sent out to them ; the articles are all first-rate, being unadulterated. We drink porter at 3d. per pot, and buy tea for 1s. a pound ; we ought to be very grateful to Government for this boon : the men are so contented and behaving like angels. I have just completed my stud, having to-day bought my fifth horse, two baggage animals and three chargers, so I have plenty, you see, to have shot under me. I dined, I think I told you, with the Duke of Cambridge the other day ; hearing of Ella's arrival, he desired one of his aides-de-camp to write me word to that effect. Wasn't it kind of him ? he is constantly asking after her and poor Henry. He is a thoroughly kind-hearted man, and a first-rate officer.— . . . Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

CAMP VARNA, *June* 19, 1854.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Our Division embarked from Scutari on Tuesday last, and arrived at Varna on Wednesday afternoon. We saw the combined fleet lying at anchor off Kavarna, about two miles off. The Generals and their staffs of the two Brigades had a ship to ourselves ; we disembarked our horses and baggage as soon as we could, but not till the night had already set in with rain, so that we began the first night of our campaign in real earnest, for we did not land at the

town, but on the south side of the Bay, where there was no habitation of any kind. We had to land at a very rough kind of pier run out for the disembarkation of troops by our sappers, and as the night was very dark, and there was a good deal of baggage to get on shore besides forty horses, there was some little confusion and one or two things lost. We then had to pitch our tents in the midst of the rain, picket our horses, and make snug for the night. I never slept sounder in all my life, for the pattering of the rain against a tent is always an agreeable soporific, unless it is blowing a hurricane. The next morning we packed our baggage animals, and rode round the head of the lake to the outside of the town, where our Division was to be encamped; and here we are in a fresh encamping-ground, not so beautiful as the last, but still very pretty. We are just outside the trumpery little fortifications of Varna—here and there are large tumuli, where the Russians buried their dead in 1828–29; the men build their kitchens against the sides, or rather dig them into the sides of these mounds, and occasionally the bones inside get burnt by the fire. Several broken pieces of a shell have been picked up, a grape-shot, and the brass plate of a Russian soldier's cloak with [? *the number of*] his regiment upon it, the remains of the siege of 1828–29. The plain on which we are encamped is a very pretty piece of ground, with the Devna Lake on one side of it and a range of lofty hills on the other, which flow and run west and east. The French are encamped in the plain as well as ourselves; we are all mixed up together (of course each army has its separate piece of ground), we fraternise immensely. They have one Division in advance on the top of the high range I have mentioned to watch our front; and we have a Division about 9 miles up the plain at a place called Aladyn, at the other end of the Devna Lake, to watch our left. I rode to this place yesterday over such a pretty country, one mass of uninterrupted verdure, hardly cultivated anywhere, but fertile to a

degree. In good hands this would be a splendid country: it wants water certainly, there are no rivers but plenty of springs, cattle are in abundance and fowls cheap to your heart's content; geese sell for 1s. apiece, and green geese for 6d. apiece. I do not know what our next movements will be; they are, however, sadly hampered by the Commissariat, the heads of which department are utterly inefficient. The chief is long past his work, and ought to be sent home; we cannot move, owing to his utter want of foresight and common precaution, and general mismanagement in not providing the army with proper means of transport to move up the country, and he has established no proper depot of grain or the means of subsistence, as he ought to have done. I had such a touching and beautiful letter from dear Ella the other day announcing the sad result of her visit to Odessa. I was introduced to Captain Drummond of the *Retribution* yesterday; he spoke in such high terms of Ella: she is indeed a noble creature. He told me that she visited all the prisoners at Odessa, and addressed a few parting words to them, telling them she hoped they would not forget all the advice their late Captain used to give them as to their behaviour. Everyone speaks in such high terms of the noble manner in which she has behaved. I do feel proud of her. Captain Drummond told me that poor Henry was universally beloved in the Fleet, and that the *Tiger* would never have been lost had he been well, but that when the ship ran ashore he was ill in bed of a fever. He had this fever on him before the bombardment of Odessa, but said nothing about it for fear it should prevent his going, and immediately after the affair he took to his bed. He did his duty like a true and gallant sailor. And now God bless you, my dear mother.—Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

CAMP ALADYN, *July* 4.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We have at length had our first march, and are encamped near the village of Aladyn, upon some beautiful high land exquisitely wooded, overlooking the Devna Lake. We struck our tents at Varna at half-past three o'clock on Saturday morning last, and marched to this place, which is about 9 miles from Varna on the Schumla road. We have been very lucky in our weather till yesterday; it has certainly been excessively hot, oppressively so at times, with a hot wind blowing across the sandy plains, worse than no air at all. Yesterday, however, we had the most tremendous storm any of us had ever seen. The rain came down for three-quarters of an hour in such torrents that it ran like a sluice through the tents, some of which came to the ground, floating everything that was in the tents. The ground was so saturated, and the men so completely soused, that it was impossible to sleep in the tents, or indeed anywhere, the ground being one mass of mud. Sitting down was equally impossible, so we made large fires and kept them up all night, officers and men standing round them drying their clothes and singing songs till the sun rose. Some of the Guards were so wet and dirty that they were converted into Highlanders, and mounted sentry with no other clothes than their greatcoats and shoes. I most fortunately missed it all, for General Bentinck and Sir G. Campbell with their two Brigade-Majors had started on horseback immediately after breakfast to visit our outposts and then ride on to Devna, which will be our next march, so as to learn the road and see what the place is like. The ride there was lovely, over hills and across valleys, with a view of the Balkans the whole way. After two hours' ride, we got to a large plain with a little river running through it, the first I have seen since I left England, except by the bye the one in the Valley of Sweet Waters. I cannot describe to you how refreshing

it was to hear the rippling of the water, and refresh one's eyes with the sight of a clear running stream. The Light Division, the cavalry and two batteries of artillery, are encamped in this large and beautiful plain, and half-way up the side of one of the hills is the village of Devna. We paid our respects to the General, who told us that he was expecting a visit from Omar Pasha, who would pass by there on his way from Silistria to Varna to consult over future operations with the French and English generals. About two o'clock a Turkish soldier arrived, announcing the approach of Omar. We mounted our horses and galloped into the country to meet him. We soon saw winding down one of the ravines two britzkas-and-four and a squadron of cavalry. We met them at a little hamlet on the river-side. The cavalcade was an interesting one; the postboys to Omar's britzkas were not like the peaceful British "Horney," but artillery drivers armed to the teeth. Omar Pasha went into one of the houses, and there we were all introduced to him. He is a fine handsome man of about fifty-eight, with grey hair, moustache grey, and a closely trimmed beard, a round and well-formed head, and an agreeable expression of countenance; his smile is very pleasing. He has a capital figure, *svelte* and very upright and soldier-like, and is about 5 ft. 9 in. in height. Omar Pasha told us that the Russians were in all eight divisions, that they were retreating from Kalarasch opposite Silistria and were nearly all gone, that they were moving in the direction of Brailow, to occupy an entrenched position on the river Sereth, which separates Walachia from Moldavia; you will see that this is the shortest road into the Russian territory. We told him that we had lately heard strong rumours of an armistice; he replied, "*Une armistice ne serait pas bonne, il faudra livrer une bataille d'abord—et après cela une armistice.*" He told us the Russian cavalry, of which we had heard so much, was immensely exaggerated, that they were very slow and were with difficulty got into movement, and he

added, "One of your regiments would ride down four of theirs;" he evidently thought very lightly of that arm, and he is well able to judge, having in former days himself charged them. He was accompanied by a Captain Simmons in our Engineer Corps, who did him immense service in Silistria, and is his right-hand man. (Lord Raglan speaks most highly of his services.) He told us that the defence of Silistria was a wonderful one, that the Turks fought to admiration, but that for all that he could not understand why the Russians failed to take it, for he said the outworks where all the fighting was, was a low, narrow breastwork with a very small ditch in front which a horse might ride over. General Schildees, the Russian Chief Engineer, had lost a leg, and a Russian Division-General and two Brigadier-Generals had been killed; deserters had spoken in strong terms of the misery and disease in the Russian army, and they calculated that their loss in killed, sickness, etc., amounted to 30,000. On the eve of breaking up the siege the Russians' order of the day was that the army would retreat in consequence of the threatening attitude of Austria. But Austria, Omar Pasha said, had not yet entered the provinces. After our conference Omar Pasha reviewed our troops encamped in the valley, and you never saw men turn out quicker or cleaner, or move better. He made the cavalry charge, and rode with them, to see the pace they could go. He is now at Varna discussing matters with Lord Raglan and Marshal St. Arnaud. . . .—Ever your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

P.S.—Poor dear Ella is, I suppose, with you by this time. Tell me all about her when you next write. I am thinking of her morning, noon, and night.

To Lady Stephenson

CAMP ALADYN, *July* 17, 1854.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I must write to you for all my sisters, to acknowledge all the kind congratulations I

have received from them. My delight is so great that I hardly appreciate it fully as yet ; the greatest happiness I feel is from feeling what pleasure it has caused you all, and for this I am more grateful than for the happiness it individually causes myself. How I should have enjoyed having been myself the bearer of this piece of good news ! I used often to look forward to doing this as one of the brightest prospects of my life. What a lucky fellow I am ! A Lieutenant-Colonel at thirty-three, without purchase, and with a company in the Guards, that insures me an income of £460 a year, and such a position ! There is not a more enviable one in society. They have appointed me to the command of the left flank company, which is a post of honour that all the captains try for, and it is a great compliment to me to get it over all their heads, and what is a still greater compliment, that none of them are jealous, but all resigned their claims almost, at all events had made up their minds that I was the proper person to have it. Of course I am sorry to give up my present appointment as Brigade-Major, but that feeling is completely absorbed by the bright prospect of permanent promotion which sets me up for life. We are still at Aladyn, but there are strong rumours afloat that we are to make an expedition either to Trebizond to drive the Russians out of Asia Minor, Circassia, etc., or else to land near Anapa and besiege that place at once. Of course there is nothing certain on this subject, but nothing is more likely. We can do nothing now on the Danube, the Austrians being more than sufficient to drive the Russians beyond the Pruth. We must not remain idle at this important moment when advantage gained over the enemy would be of greater moment than ever. To attack the Crimea just at the outset of the campaign would, I think, be highly impolitic, as a reverse might be anticipated ; but by depriving the enemy of all his vast possessions in Asia Minor, Georgia, and Circassia, and taking his only remaining stronghold there, Anapa, we should then be in a better condition to attack the Crimea politically as well as strategically. In a military

point of view a landing would, I believe, be much better effected on the east end of the Crimea, and we should bring with us the Turkish army and the Circassians if requisite; then, in the case of a reverse in the Crimea, we should at all events have gained those successes in Circassia which would enable us to make better conditions than if we had attacked the Crimea without having gained them. However, these are only conjectures, founded on very imperfect data, which help to amuse one and wile away the time. One thing is quite certain, and that is that the transport are ordered up, and that we are going somewhere. Our life is not a very busy one just now, and since my last letter I have not seen anything new that would interest you; our situation here, however, is, as far as scenery goes, a lovely one, and is a constant source of delight; the rides are exquisite, and the country perfect for galloping. I took a charming ride the other day to the top of a range of hills about 5 miles off, over country of such a rich soil, almost entirely uncultivated, that I am sure an English farmer would make his fortune here in a few years. We get very fairly furnished with provisions here, and have established a bazaar in our camp where all the country people in the neighbourhood bring eggs, butter, fowls, bread, milk, and fruit. Just before leaving Varna I had a visit from the Baron de Mallet, Ernest's [24] cousin; he is now *Chef de Bataillon* in the 21st Foot. He was so altered that I did not at first recognise him, but I was really glad to see him, for I took a liking to him when he was in England. We have had intensely hot weather here, 99° in the shade, that is in the General's marquee with both ends open to the air; latterly, however, the weather has changed and we have heavy storms of wind and rain, which are still threatening us. . . . I write to you because I cannot write to all. . . . If dear Ella is with you give her my tenderest love, tell her I honour and love her for her noble conduct more than I can express. Cheer her up and make her burden easy,

and don't let her dwell too much upon her sorrows. . . .—Your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—Your hearty congratulations and all the affectionate expressions in your most welcome letter are more than I can properly acknowledge. Believe me that they have given me the most sincere pleasure, and I am really more delighted at seeing how much pleasure my success has caused to you all at home than at the immediate benefit coming to myself. I am indeed a lucky fellow, and my path through life has been strewn with more roses than fall on those of most other men. The few anxious moments I have had in looking forward to my prospects, when I used to come and consult you, are now so many pleasant recollections, and all those little plans I used to suggest to you I now look back to with the same amount of pleasure one would feel in having at length succeeded in knocking down a troublesome fellow who had been following you all your life. The satisfaction of slipping from an uncertain and insufficient income to a handsome competency and such an enviable position it requires experience alone to appreciate. Thank Julia over and over again for the affectionate interest she has invariably shown in me. I pictured to myself the little toast-drinking party in Bolton Row, who, I am sure, responded to the sentiment of the evening with all the affection their little hearts are capable of. . . . —Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

CAMP ALADYN, *July* 17, 1854.

To Lady Stephenson

CAMP GEVORCKLIN, *August* 13, 1854.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—You have probably heard by this time of the sickness we have had in camp. The

cholera has certainly been very bad, and has visited some regiments pretty severely; the Light Division has, I should think, lost upwards of 80 men, and our own has suffered to about the same extent. The Coldstream lost 9 men in two days; our battalion has as yet been the least severely hit of any in our Brigade, for although our list of sick is very high, ranging from 130 to 150, we have had comparatively few deaths, certainly under 20. The epidemic began about three weeks ago, and I think we have seen the worst of it; it has, however, left the army in a terribly weak state. The men cannot eat their meat, but bury it in large quantities, and can get little else to replace it; then a heavy sickness like this is not the most lively thing in the world in camp, and the constant sight of funerals, men being carried to hospitals, and the general debility of the men, the great majority of whom have more or less suffered, has tended to depress them a little. I think, however, we are now improving, and a movement of some kind or other would soon set us all right again. As for myself, I have hitherto escaped and am in better health than ever. I think that with due care you may safely keep clear of illness. Tell Isabella I have to thank her mainly for this; she made two flannel belts for me at Malta which I have been constantly wearing for the last month, and this, together with another, such as the Turks themselves wear round the loins and stomach, have kept me safe and sound. Great preparations have been going on for some time past for an expedition to the Crimea with intention of attacking Sebastopol. I wish with all my heart it would take place, it would cure the men directly, and put an end to the monotonous idle life we are leading now; but I am afraid it is very doubtful if we shall go there, or even fire a shot, for there are strong rumours abroad that negotiations are again going on, and if they should turn out to be successful, and peace ensue, it will be but a doubtful subject for rejoicing, for the Russians will be sure to be at the old game again two or three years hence. I am sadly afraid we shall go into winter

quarters without having struck a blow at the Russians. We moved from Aladyn to our present camp Gevorcklin, last Thursday fortnight, and they now talk of moving us back again to Varna, to the south side of the Bay (we were on the north side before), with the intention, I hope, of embarking for the Crimea. I suppose you have heard of the false move the French made to the Dobrutska. St. Arnaud heard of a body of 10,000 Russians being still there, so without saying to Lord Raglan a single word of what he was going to do, he marched off suddenly three Divisions of from 6000 to 10,000 men each to surprise them ; the expedition signally failed—there was no such Russian corps there ; all they saw were a few Cossacks, the wells were choked with dead bodies, and after a forced march which the Zouaves made, they suffered to such an extent that the cholera broke out and that Division of 8000 is said to have lost 75 officers and 3400 men. The whole expedition returned, and the loss of the French army I have been told on the best authority amounts to 7000 men. I should think St. Arnaud would most undoubtedly be recalled, for a more disgraceful display of generalship I never heard of. Thank Heaven we are in better hands. Lord Raglan knew well the unhealthy state and absence of all food in the Dobrutska, and would never have dreamt of such a reckless scheme. There was a tremendous fire at Varna three days ago, and about one-third of the town entirely destroyed ; a great deal of our own and of the French Commissariat stores are destroyed, but I believe it originated accidentally in one of the French shops, although at first attributed to the Greeks. Since writing the above I have just heard, with reference to our movements, that we march for Varna on Tuesday, and about a week afterwards embark for Sebastopol. . . . —Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

VARNA, *August* 23, 1854.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—Since I last wrote to you from Aladyn you have, I suppose, heard from my mother that we had moved to the hills to a village called Gevorcklin ; we have now left that, and have marched back to Varna, not exactly to our old ground but to the hills on the other, the south side of the Bay. This move was made, I believe, for two reasons ; first, to move us to healthier ground, for the cholera and dysentery have laid us sadly prostrate, and, secondly, to be handy for embarkation. I fancy there is no doubt whatever that we are on the eve of some great expedition ; preparations of all kinds are being made. The artillery are being practised at embarking and disembarking, cavalry equipments and stores of all kinds are being shipped, there is a Turkish fleet of 12 sail of the line in the Bay, and it is said that from 15,000 to 20,000 Turks will accompany us. Sebastopol is, I firmly believe, the object in view, but there are a great many that do not believe it, and are more inclined to think that a landing at Odessa with a view to acting upon the enemy's left and rear is the probable plan. There is no doubt that we should have been off a week ago if it had not been for the cholera, which has so decimated the French army and visited so severely our own and both the fleets as effectually to paralyse our movements. The loss in the English army has been 18 officers dead and 40 invalided, and amongst the men 800 deaths, from which you may judge how many sick there have been altogether. This sickness and mortality commenced about the last week in July, but is now rapidly disappearing ; during that time there was scarcely an officer or man in our Brigade that was not affected with diarrhœa or something worse ; of course, a good many had it in a very trifling form, but very few, if any, escaped altogether. Our Brigade lost two officers the day before yesterday, Colonel Trevelyan

and Colonel Crombie; the first died of cholera in ten hours, and the latter after a lingering illness of dysentery; they were both in the Coldstreams. However, the disease is rapidly on the wane, and the men are recovering health and spirits fast. You have, of course, heard long ago that the enemy have crossed the Pruth, and that the Austrians and Turks are at Bucharest. The Russians have lost, since Silistria, 16,000 men from sickness and fighting. How will all this affect the campaign in the eyes of diplomatists? The Crimea seems to me now more than ever the point at which we ought to strike a sharp and decisive blow, and I firmly believe we are going to do it. In the meantime, we have received very bad news from Asia Minor, namely, that the right wing of the Turkish army has been almost annihilated and somewhere near Mount Ararat. They say Lord Raglan does not at all like the accounts he has received, but as yet the details have not reached us, and so many lies are abroad connected with every event that takes place in these parts that it would be idle telling you all the rumours one hears. Nasmyth, however, whom you have heard of at the siege of Silistria, has been sent by Lord Raglan to Batoum to get information. We like our new camp very much, but any spot would be preferable to the last, filled as it was with unpleasant associations. However, in the midst of all these serious moments, a circumstance occurred from which it was impossible to restrain a suppressed smile. The men as they died were sewn up in their blankets and carried on a stretcher to their graves, but from *esprit de galanterie* for the ladies —two of the men's wives having died—we made rough kinds of coffins for them. Materials for this were not easy to obtain, and we had to knock to pieces boxes that had brought beer, provisions, and stores to the camp, so that when one of the women's funerals moved off, there was the coffin carried on men's shoulders covered all over with "Bass's superior Pale Ale." It looked so like a trick in a pantomime, the outside being such a fearful

contrast to what was inside, that it was impossible not to smile. . . .—Ever, my dear William, your affectionate brother, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Sister, Henrietta Maria Stephenson

VARNA, *August* 24, 1854.

MY DEAR MINNY,—You have been such a good correspondent, and have been so constant in your writing, that it has often gone to my heart to let so many of your kind letters be laid aside unanswered, but when writing home I have always thought it best to write to my mother, because I know it gives her so much pleasure to hear from me, and because I know you see my letters when she has read them. However, I must break through the rule this time, if only to thank you for all your kind recollections of me. I have been all along and am still in first-rate health and spirits, and have as yet most fortunately escaped from the sickness which has sent so many of our poor fellows to their last account. My eyes have never even given me one thought, and as for my liver (to enter into home particulars) I have not yet been sensible of its existence. We have now moved our camp to about four miles south of Varna Bay, upon some fine high ground, with a charming view of the Black Sea. There is a beautiful gully full of trees leading down to the seashore where we constantly go to bathe, and where I delight in roaming about by myself, sitting at times upon the beach, watching the lovely sea with the bright light of an evening sun upon it and ruminating about home. We have had what the ancients would have thought a portentous omen lately, but which we attribute to a probable change of season. An enormous flight of some thousand storks flew over our camp some two days ago on their way to the South, and yesterday we were visited with swarms of locusts from the East; they filled the air for several hours during their flight, and it was a very

pretty sight to see them; they were about as thick as a good snowstorm. They are, however, the only wild beasts I have seen in this country, and knowing your predilection for the entomological world I have had serious thoughts of sending you a squashed specimen in a letter, but I am afraid it might seriously affect the amount of postage. My mother wrote to me in a great state of alarm the other day to know how I managed to get on with such a small number of linen shirts; tell her I have not worn a linen shirt for four months, nor would I do so now for anything. I invariably wear and sleep in flannel shirts, which are decidedly the most healthy; however, pray thank her for thinking about it, and when we go into winter quarters I shall perhaps write home for a few. Our thoughts and hopes are anxiously directed towards an expedition of some kind or other, and preparations are no doubt going on, which I will let you know more about when they are a little matured. You have no idea of the delight with which we should hail the news of our departure to the Crimea or Odessa, for we have no wish to return to England without having done something; and the dullness and monotony of our life for the last few months will considerably enhance the pleasure of an expedition of some kind. We manage to live very well as regards food, and are well supplied with everything excepting butter and eggs, which we cannot get at all; and milk is also a luxury we very seldom get. I am not quite sure, however, that you would be fully alive to the merits of our ration beef; it is so perfectly hard that we can very seldom eat it, and they do not give us mutton above once a fortnight; but we make very good soup with the beef by the aid of some onions and rice, and have very often chicken boiled with rice, or as curry. On the whole, we live uncommonly well, and are as fat as pigs; and the soundness with which everybody sleeps at night is quite delightful. I have been writing sad stuff to you, my dear Minny, but I have really very

little to write about, for we do and see little or nothing. This is a most uninteresting country, for although very pretty in many respects it is almost a desert. There is no town but dirty, filthy Varna, and no point of interest to go and visit, so you will see I have not much of interest to communicate. Pray give me full accounts of Hampton Court, your rooms and how you like them, and any little gossip concerning your new abode which you may think of. Give my kindest love to Ella, and tell her I think of her incessantly; poor darling, how I long to see her again! Talk to me a great deal about her and the boys [25] when you write. . . .—Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

SHIP *Kangaroo*, EUPATORIA BAY,
Thursday, September 14, 1854.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have just time to tell you in a few words what is going on here. We are in the act of disembarking. The French have already landed a few troops, and have hoisted their flag on shore; a few Cossacks are watching us a little way inland; there is no opposition. We passed Eupatoria yesterday, and are now well into the Bay, close inshore about 20 or 25 miles from Sebastopol, and directly south of some salt lakes close to the sea, which you will see marked in any good map. We have recovered from our sickness, and are all in excellent health and the highest spirits. The sight of this magnificent fleet, numbering upwards of 200 sail, is magnificent. The whole affair is really more like a pleasure trip than anything else, and if you were to hear all the laughing and joking that is incessantly going on, and the utter coolness with which everybody views the whole affair, you would fancy yourself just about to land at Boulogne with a charming Continental tour in prospect. I must soon get ready

for landing. . . .—Believe me ever your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

BALACLAVA, *September* 21, 1854.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Excuse this scrawl. I am lying flat on my stomach in front of the bivouac fire on the well-fought field of battle on the river Alma, which must plead my excuse for this illegible scrawl. . . . We remained at the spot where we disembarked till Tuesday the 19th, to get our troops landed and organise our transport. On that day we marched about 10 miles, the whole army, English and French. In the [*?afternoon*] at half-past three we heard the first shot fired, our cavalry and horse artillery having come across the Russian outposts ; a few lives were lost. The next day, the 20th, the whole army continued its road, and at midday we came upon the enemy entrenched in a fearfully strong position on some heights to the south of the river Alma. I cannot describe to you how strong the enemy's position was ; it ought to have been impregnable. The Russian generals whom we have taken prisoners say they expected to keep us at bay for three weeks. In three hours the enemy were in full retreat. So confident of victory were they that ladies came to see the fun ; a bonnet has been picked up, a feather of which I have kept to adorn your own bonnet. It was a severe action, of which the English had the brunt. Our loss is 96 officers killed and wounded, and 2000 rank and file ditto. Our own battalion had 11 officers, 11 sergeants, and 168 privates killed and wounded ; our Colour-staff was smashed, the silk had 26 shot through it. Thank God I am not hit. We are within 15 miles of Sebastopol, where we expect to arrive to-morrow.—Your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

BALACLAVA, *September* 28, 1854.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—I hope my mother received my letter dated 21st September, and that you received mine dated 22nd. I had no time to give you more than a description of the battlefield and the glorious result of the action of the 20th, but I can now give you a short account of the affair as far as we were concerned. At half-past one the enemy fired his first gun, when our Division, being in support of the Light Division, deployed into line on the plain to the north of the Alma, and advanced till we got well under fire of the heavy guns of the enemy, when we were ordered to lie down. The fire now began to be pretty heavy, for they had some 40-pounders in position. Our artillery now came into action, but could do little or nothing against the overpowering weight of metal of the enemy, and after a time were forced to retire out of action altogether, so that on our side the day was evidently to be fought by the infantry alone. Our Division now continued advancing for short distances and then lying down, all this under a very heavy fire of shot and shells, the men as cool and steady as anything you can conceive, as if they had been under fire all their lives. At length we reached a low wall parallel with the valley, about 700 or 800 yards from the enemy's position; we scrambled over this and entered some vineyards where the enemy had cut down all the trees to prevent them giving us cover, and also to break the steadiness of our advance from their forming a kind of abattis. The enemy had been previously driven out of this ground by our riflemen. The fire was now most severe, for the enemy now fired grape at us (very appropriate in a vineyard), which, with shot and shell, whistled about us and ploughed up the ground in all directions. How any of us escaped is a miracle; our line was, of course, completely broken, owing to the nature of the ground. We shortly reached the river and forded it; on the other side was a narrow

path and then a steep bank, 10 or 12 feet high, which completely sheltered us from the enemy's fire, and where in two minutes we might have reformed and advanced in good order to the attack; but there was not a second to lose—the Light Division had already suffered fearfully and were pushing on to the redoubt. We were required to support them immediately and had to scramble up the bank in our broken and disordered state. Arrived at the top we found ourselves at the foot of a natural glacis about 450 yards from the redoubt, the ground sloping gradually up and entirely exposed to the enemy's fire. I think that about this time the fire of the enemy's artillery began to cease, and that they must have begun to draw off their heavy guns, otherwise we must have captured more than we did; we advanced some distance up the slope, without yet commencing to fire, and already were the 7th and 23rd close to the parapet of the breastwork when the murderous fire from behind it forced them to fall back, which they did upon us, throwing us into worse confusion than we were already in, so that we had to rally our men before we could advance in our turn. In the meantime the enemy, seeing a momentary check, rushed out of the work—foolish fellows. I do not think one returned to it; they were shot down, I believe, to a man. By this time our battalion was got together for the first time in tolerable order since we entered the vineyards, and then a short rush made them masters of the redoubt, which they were the first to enter, and the day was now won all along the line. The steadiness and pluck of our officers and men in rallying in the way they did under a murderous fire, without at the time being able to return a single shot, owing to the stragglers of the 7th and 23rd, who still remained in our front, was most praiseworthy. Never, I am sure, did an army behave better throughout all ranks, and the praise that has been bestowed upon the Light and 1st Divisions, who really had all the work, is most gratifying. I am, of course, unable to give you any account of the French operations, which were too far off,

but they did their work nobly. The Russians confess to 5000 killed and wounded, and have consequently lost much more. We bivouacked on the field till Saturday morning to remove our wounded and bury the dead, when we marched for the Katschka, the next river, where the ground was, if possible, more formidable than at the Alma, but capable of being turned by the sea. The next day (Sunday) we crossed the Belbek, where the enemy might have made a more formidable stand than ever, but there was not a man to oppose us. We bivouacked within 4 miles of Sebastopol, and started the next day (Monday) to march round to the south side of Sebastopol. This was a very bold and difficult manœuvre, for we had to change our base and make a flank movement round the town to get to Balaclava. We marched for ten hours, and in the course of it came upon the rear of a body of 20,000 Russians—an hour earlier and we should have probably taken them all prisoners; as it was, we captured a large amount of stores and ammunition and a few guns. So great was their panic that many of them threw away their arms and their knapsacks and dispersed in all directions. They have evidently a wholesome recollection of the river Alma. On Tuesday we marched to Balaclava, which we took after firing a few shots, and where some of the Fleet are now disembarking the battery train and ammunition for the siege, and where we have now established our base of operations. We are now 7 miles from Sebastopol, and in about three days, when all the guns are landed, shall begin the siege. We are all in great health and spirits, and certain, please God, of another victory. . . .—Your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

CAMP BEFORE SEBASTOPOL,
October 22, 1854.

MY DEAR MOTHER,— . . . I am so totally devoid of writing materials that you must not be surprised at

my writing so seldom. This sheet has been given me as a precious gift which I now bestow on you. To-morrow we shall have been three weeks before Sebastopol, and to-day is the sixth day since our batteries have opened. I hope you will soon hear of our success, but it will be hard work to win the town, owing to the vast number of heavy guns the enemy have got in the town, and the rocky nature of the ground in front, which makes it extremely difficult for us to approach the town under cover by throwing up regular parallels ; we have, however, considerably reduced the fire of the place, and our engineers report favourably of the progress we are making. You must not, however, be too sanguine as to a too speedy result of the siege. We have all been uncommonly hard worked during the last ten days, and shall continue to be so till the place is ours. In the meantime officers and men are in high spirits, and do their duty admirably. We have lost a few lives, but very few indeed, and with the exception of two or three officers, the casualties are most insignificant, which is the more surprising considering the heavy fire that has been almost incessantly kept up from the place since the army came before it. We have got a tolerable number of prisoners and deserters, and one of them, a Polish officer, who was examined this morning, gives a deplorable account of the town. He says that the Russians have lost 3000 men in killed and wounded, and that they are quite disheartened. Menschikov [26] has left to take command of an army which threatens our rear ; the Governor has been killed, and Nachinov, of Sinope [27] celebrity, is in command. We have been wonderfully lucky in the weather, which is of great importance ; excepting two days of cold wind, we have had uninterrupted summer throughout. . . .—Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

P.S.—I never was better in my life.

To his Sister, Mrs. Melvil Wilson

BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *November* 2, 1854.

MY DEAREST LOU,—It would be worth fighting twenty battles to receive such another letter from you as the one that reached me yesterday. I cannot describe to you the pleasure it gave me to learn how much kind sympathy I had awakened in you all. . . . I pore over your letter again and again with undiminished pleasure ; such proofs of affection are worth all the medals in the world, and I would a thousand times sooner possess (as I do) the conviction of your sincere affection than all the decorations under heaven. I am sorry I have written so seldom to you, but I could not oftener. We landed in the Crimea with no baggage of any description but what we carried on our backs, and, moreover, had to take in our haversacks three days' provisions. I had no portable blotting-book, and paper carried loose in the haversack would soon have been spoiled. The wounded officers were, of course, better off, and it was from one of them I borrowed a sheet of note-paper (most reluctantly parted with) on which I wrote to my mother the day after the battle. The following day I got another sheet of paper from the Commissariat, on which I wrote to William, and about a week after that I had another given me, on which I wrote to you from Balaclava. . . . We are still hammering away at Sebastopol, the capture of which is harder work than was at first supposed, but on Saturday or Monday next I believe the place will be assaulted by the French and English conjointly. Our Division, however, together with the 2nd, and a strong body of French will, I believe, be used as a covering party against an army of twenty or twenty-five thousand of the enemy now threatening our rear, and whose movements I am supposed to be at this moment watching, being on outlying picket with my company, about a mile from their outposts, which have already disturbed me in my occupation once or twice by firing an occasional shot which obliges me to

jump up and see what is going on, and so compel my thoughts to travel with wonderful rapidity from your drawing-room at Versailles to the enemy's army in the Crimea. We have had one or two brilliant affairs with the enemy since Alma, besides our sharp-shooters being in daily contact with the enemy under their walls, or performing deeds of daring gallantry which makes one proud indeed of our noble army. Officers and men have all been severely worked at the siege since the 7th of this month, constantly under heavy fire in the trenches, which is by no means an agreeable occupation, and altogether we are nearly worked off our legs, but no one complains. There is a spirit in this army such as I am sure was never surpassed, and I think our labours are near their close. However, whether we take Sebastopol or not, one great point has been gained. We have learnt that Russia is one gigantic humbug, one vast bubble, which we have helped to burst, and in the words of our mutual friend, Sam Weller, if the Emperor wishes to blow another next year we will come and burst that too. After what we have seen of Russian pluck, no one need ever fear Russia again, except Turks, Poles, and such small fry; as for the idea of fearing Russian influence in India, there is no more to fear from them than from the Chinese, except their artillery, which is very formidable and most excellent. Their troops are perfectly contemptible. . . .—Ever your affectionate brother,

FRED.

To Lady Stephenson

BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *November 7*, 1854.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We have fought another general action, much more severe than even the one at Alma, in which, thanks be to God, I have again escaped unhurt, as also Mitchell,[28] Frederick,[29] and Robin Hamilton.[30] Large reinforcements of the enemy have been arriving from the south of Russia so rapidly and so entirely unknown to us that Lord Raglan was not acquainted

with the fact till informed of it by the prisoners taken in the action. The troops were brought in carts and carriages of all descriptions with one, some say two, of the royal archdukes. On Sunday morning, the 5th, these fresh troops, made up by the enemy already in our rear to between forty and fifty thousand, with some very heavy field pieces, attacked our right, the weakest part of our position, and for three hours this immense force was opposed by our 2nd Division, about 2000 strong, supported by the Brigade of Guards, about 1000 strong. These 3000 men were reinforced during the morning by about 3000 more, until about half-past eleven, when the French came up, a regiment at a time, till our united force amounted to about 15,000 at the most; firing did not cease till dark, and a more fearful day was probably never witnessed. The enemy were at length driven back and completely routed. Their loss is estimated at about 12,000 killed, wounded, and prisoners. Our loss is about 90 officers killed and wounded, and 2000 men ditto. Our Brigade had the brunt of it again, and their loss (included in the above) is 13 officers killed, 17 wounded, and about 560 men killed and wounded. It is impossible to exaggerate the noble manner in which our troops behaved—the numbers engaged will speak more eloquently than I can. The battle itself was so confused that any description in this short note would be next to impossible. I have chiefly written this to let you know that I am safe and well, although I was twice struck, and my escape was most merciful. One ball struck the star clasp that fastened my cloak, smashed it, and likewise broke a brass button on my red coat, which luckily was directly beneath the clasp, which last was bent so as to tear my coat and slightly bruise my chest. The other ball struck my steel scabbard and dented it in, making a bruise on the outside of my thigh, which it otherwise must have entered. The siege in the meanwhile is not going on altogether as well as one could wish. This reinforcement of the enemy will tell immensely in his

favour and will hamper our movements very much. I hope, however, my next accounts will be more cheering, for though I am now giving you an account of a most glorious victory, it has been a most sad one, and anything but a cause for rejoicing. . . . —Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Niece, Catherine Wilson (afterwards Baronne de Moidrey)

BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *November* 12, 1854.

. . . I do not think there were six officers in our Brigade who were not hit somewhere or other. Lord Raglan speaks in the highest terms of our Brigade. He says they saved the right of our position, and I am conceited enough to tell you a pretty compliment he paid us. One of our officers was paying a visit to one of his A.D.C.'s. the day after the action. Lord Raglan came up to them and said to the A.D.C., "Do you know whom you are talking to? You are talking to a hero, and so are all of them." It is not every day one has such a compliment paid one. . . . The Zouaves fought beautifully, they were the admiration of everyone. . . . This attack, however, which owing to the enemy having suddenly received some reinforcement has altered our affairs materially, and Sebastopol is no longer the easy prey which we were at first given to understand it would be. However, I hope matters will soon mend, and that the next account you get will be reporting progress; at present, however, we are at a standstill and I fear for some time. We are now waiting for reinforcements. . . . You must not . . . think about that foolish expression I made use of, viz. "a pleasure excursion," which I used thoughtlessly, as I am sorry to say I do very often when in good spirits.—Your affectionate

FRED.

To his Sister, Mrs. Henry Giffard

BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *November* 12, 1854.

MY DEAREST ELLA,— . . . I am delighted beyond measure to hear that you are by this time comfortably settled in your new abode—what would I not give to see you there? . . . The severe action which we fought on the 5th November . . . was indeed a bloody affair. . . . The enemy lost 15,000 killed and wounded and prisoners at the lowest computation, some run it up to 20,000; our loss was 90 officers and 2000 men killed and wounded: the French suffered much less than we did. . . . On Friday the 3rd the enemy were observed celebrating High Mass in the valley in our rear, and one of our officers made the observation that it was preparatory to an attack, and so it proved. The following day, Saturday, I was on outlying picket, a rainy day with a fog at times so thick that you could not see 50 yards; that night the fog continued, but not so thick, and the enemy profited by this to make his preparations. Rumbling of wheels was heard during the night, but not much notice was taken of it; this turned out to be the enemy's guns being brought into position. At daybreak on Sunday morning we observed the enemy in movement; at the same time a discharge of musketry was heard, our outposts being driven in, all the bells of Sebastopol were set ringing, and then the enemy, amounting to about 50,000, yelled like demons and advanced to the attack. Our position is a range of heights encircling the south side of the town, the right—the weakest part—resting on the high road which passes close by Inkerman at the head of the harbour. This was the part attacked, it was at the moment only occupied by our 2nd Division, about 3000 strong, and was immediately reinforced by the Guards, who could not muster more than 1100 (half of whom are killed or wounded). With this small force we had to contend (my company having in the meantime been relieved off picket) with an overwhelming force for

some time, till the 3rd Division, 2800 strong, came to our support; even then we did not muster 7000 men (against 50,000), and it was not till about half-past ten, or eleven, when the French came to our help, that the day began to turn in our favour. The enemy was then a few hours after completely routed. Lord Raglan is much pleased with our Brigade and speaks of them in the highest terms. They had to keep the right of our ground and hold the enemy in check until reinforcements came, and nobly they did their duty. This movement of the enemy has, however, for a time checked the siege. We were to have stormed on Monday the 6th, but now that the Russians have got this addition to their strength, we must hold hard till we get reinforcements ourselves, the French expecting 20,000 more men in a short space of time. In the meanwhile our position is seriously altered, and instead of being for the offensive, we have to defend ourselves as well, and the latter is the most important. How the campaign will end I do not yet clearly see, but do not be disappointed if we do not take Sebastopol. Give my kindest love to both the dear boys, and tell them I hope they will always be good and never give their mother any trouble. . . . But mind, my darling, you do not spoil them by over-indulgence and a disinclination to punish them when you feel such a step to be necessary. . . . My health never was better. When you see William . . . tell him what I have told you, that he must not be too sanguine now as to the result of this campaign. We have already been too long about it. The place is stronger than people thought, and our army has proved much too small for so serious an undertaking. We want reinforcements of 15,000 men besides the French, and *at once*.—Ever, my dear sister, your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *November* 17, 1854.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . I am afraid the news you will now receive and have lately received will be rather disheartening to you all in England. The battle of Inkerman, glorious as it was, is a doubtful subject for rejoicing, inasmuch as the enemy attacked us in consequence of his having received powerful reinforcements, which will now enable him almost to turn the tables upon us and besiege us in his turn ; in fact, since the battle our siege operations are certainly suspended until we in our turn get reinforcements (the French being daily in expectation of receiving from 15,000 to 20,000 men) ; but in this interval the enemy may receive a further addition to his strength, in which case it will go hard with us. Sebastopol never has been (and never can be without nearly double our strength) properly invested. One side of the harbour is as much as we can manage, and this line which the Allies occupy is at least 12 miles in extent, including the salient position of Balaclava, and this enormous extent of ground we have got to defend with at most 7000 men and carry on the siege at the same time. The consequence is that our troops are scattered very wide apart, too much so to render efficient support to each other at any point. The battle of Inkerman was a proof of this, for that part of our position was only defended by about 3000 men when first attacked by the enemy. It is true that other troops came to the rescue, but in such small numbers that at the end of three hours and a half fighting the English force had only risen up to 7000. The French then began to arrive and the day was ours, but that will show you what a ticklish position ours is. We do not care much for the Russians even with their present force ; they had a lesson the other day that will tell upon them, but should they get a further increase of strength before the place falls I confess that I do not see how this campaign will end.

We have suffered a severe loss owing to a hurricane which visited us last Monday; it was the most fearful weather I ever witnessed. Our tents were all blown down, and then we were exposed the whole day to a storm of wind, snow, hail, and rain which gave us an unpleasant hint as to our future winter campaign. Nine transports laden with provisions, ammunition, and winter clothing went to the bottom, together with some poor wounded fellows who were on board. In the meantime the weather has cleared up, and to-day we are enjoying the most delicious spring weather. The way in which the men bear up against all their privations is beyond all praise, and I assure you last Monday was a trial. Fancy poor fellows coming off outpost duty at sunrise, when for the last twenty-four hours they had been exposed to the inclemency of the weather, soused to the skin, and finding their tents, the only thing that can give them shelter, blown down, and having to spend that day too without shelter, the wind blowing too hard, and the rain and snow falling too heavily, to allow fires being lighted, either to dry their clothes or cook their food; but not a complaint do I hear: there is an admirable spirit in them. I hope all this business will yet end well, and reward them for their good behaviour. . . . I am still in excellent health and never have the least thing the matter with me. . . . I have just learnt that the Russians have sunk one of their own two-deckers in the harbour, but why, I cannot learn. Some of their army is now marching round towards Balaclava, where they are expecting an attack every instant. As we shall probably be all called under arms (though Balaclava is five miles off), I must conclude. . . .—Ever your affectionate brother,

FRED. STEPHENSON.

To his Niece, Catherine Wilson

BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *November 27.*

. . . The siege is still at a standstill,—we are waiting for some large mortars from Malta,—but I hope that in

about a week's time we shall begin again ; everything seems to promise favourably. I begin to wish it was all over, for it is dragging on too long, and begins to get wearisome. I can assure you that this campaign has been a very severe one, and we shall all be glad of rest. We have still got the remains of the beaten army in our rear, and are constantly on the alert in case of another attack. We are still living in tents, which at this season of the year is not such substantial protection against the weather as huts or houses would be ; but we have no materials for building the former, and the latter are of course out of the question. We have had very rainy weather lately, which has been most trying to us all. On the 14th it blew a perfect hurricane, with snow, rain, and hail ; we lost eighteen transports out at sea. . . . We on land were awoke by the fearful storm, and after in vain trying to keep our tents steady, were at length forced to strike them, to prevent their being destroyed, so we had to turn out in the storm and wait till evening, when the wind went down and enabled us to pitch our tents again ; but then the floors were all mud, it was impossible to cook, and so you may imagine what an agreeable day we passed. The poor men were sadly to be pitied, for they are very badly off for clothes, having had no change since they left England in February ; but they are in capital spirits, and behave in action beyond all praise. You have no idea how highly the French talk of the conduct of our men, and nothing can exceed the cordiality and high opinion we entertain towards each other. It seems to me as if this campaign, which has brought the English and French so closely together, had already formed a friendship between them which promises to be lasting, as it is built on a solid basis—mutual respect and esteem. Our Rifles had a most gallant affair with the enemy the other day, near the trenches, and drove them from some very difficult ground, where they were causing much annoyance, both to ourselves and to the French. Canrobert [31] so highly appreciated the

services of the Rifles upon this occasion that he issued a general order upon the subject to his army, eulogising very highly our riflemen, and holding up their conduct as an example to be followed by his own troops. This will give you an idea of the footing we are on with the French, and the opinion they have of our services. The climate here has proved, on the whole, fortunate, and extremely mild as yet; we have had plenty of rain, but little or no cold, and I hope we shall be in Sebastopol before the cold weather commences. I am living in a tent with a Captain Fraser, one of my subalterns; the other, Captain Coke, has a tent to himself. We all dine together in my tent and breakfast too, squatting on the ground, for we have neither chairs nor tables. Fraser and myself lie down together at night with a blanket or waterproof under us, and a blanket over us; we seldom or never take off our clothes, being always ready to turn out, night or day, at a moment's notice.

To Lady Stephenson

BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *December 7*, 1854.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,—I am afraid the letter I wrote you after the battle of Inkerman did not reach you nearly as soon as it should have done, for I hear that the letters were detained here, for some reason or other, for some days, which I am afraid has caused a great deal of unnecessary anxiety to you all, as well as to most people in England. However, by this time your suspense will have been long since ended. There never was a more glorious victory. The Russian loss is now computed at upwards of 20,000 (Is it not awful?), and the loss of the Allies at under 4000. The return sent in to Lord Raglan of the number of Russians we actually buried was 5200 and odd. Since that numbers, in fact heaps of dead Russians have been found in places too much exposed to the fire of the enemy's batteries to make it worth our

while to bury them—and there most of them are lying still. I do not think 6000 killed to be at all under [? *over*] the mark ; then there were the prisoners and wounded we took, exclusive of the wounded the enemy carried off during the action. We were taken completely by surprise, partly owing to the foggy weather, which enabled them to bring their guns and troops into position before the 2nd Division had almost time to form. This plan was well laid and well commenced, but they did not push their first success with sufficient vigour ; and although they fought well, as far as allowing themselves to be shot went, they certainly ought to have kept the position which they held at the commencement of the action. These enemies of ours are sad barbarians in some respects ; they always bayonet our poor wounded fellows who can't move. Such a practice is too atrocious in these times to be used by a civilised nation, and I hope it will soon be made known throughout Europe, to the everlasting shame of their army. We have lost many officers and men in this manner, whom, on retiring, we left wounded on the ground, and whom, when we advanced again and finally drove the enemy from the field, we found bayoneted in the most savage way in the face and in the belly, and many poor fellows with five or six such wounds in them. Many of these men would have recovered, but, owing to the overwhelming force with which we were assailed, we were obliged to leave them on the ground till our return, and the Russians bayoneted these poor helpless creatures as they passed them. Lord Raglan sent a strong remonstrance to Menschikov upon this brutality, who sent back an evasive sort of an answer, most discreditable to him and the Russian army. He stated that such a practice was contrary to his wishes and might perhaps have been indulged in in a few isolated cases, and pleaded for his men that they had been much exasperated by the French having desecrated one of their churches near Cape Cherson, a flimsy excuse for bayoneting

the English, if not an utter lie, inasmuch as the Russians had done the same thing at Alma, long before the French ever got to Cherson. So much for that—I only hope it will be repeated all over Europe. The French and English are so exasperated that my only fear is that the officers may not be able to restrain their men from revenging themselves in a similar manner on the next occasion; still, I do not think our fellows will ever be such brutes. We have had uninterrupted wet weather for five weeks, and our camp is become a mass of mud and filth. You can have no conception of the state it is in; this continuous wet has made sad havoc among the troops, and we have lost many men in consequence. It has, moreover, prevented us bringing up from Balaclava our new siege guns, so the siege has been at a standstill in consequence. To-day, however, the wind has changed to the N.E.; we have a bright sun and a drying wind, moreover, the enemy in our rear have been washed out of their camp, and retired yesterday to a range of hills a mile and a half farther from us, and this has opened to us another and a better road for the guns to come up by, and no time is being lost in profiting by it, and as reinforcements are arriving daily, both French and English, I still hope that before Christmas Day we shall be in possession of the north side of the harbour. I have been wonderfully well throughout all this trying weather, in fact, I have never been better in my life. We manage somehow or other to live pretty well, and that is a great secret, although one would think that sleeping on the ground every night was not a healthy practice this time of year. . . .—Your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *December* 12, 1854.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . The affection which all your expressions of anxiety show me are ample recompense for the little annoyances and privations one endures

out here. . . . The siege has been at a complete standstill on our side ever since the battle of Inkerman, and we shall not now reopen fire for another fourteen days. . . . During the whole of last month the weather has been so fearfully bad that it has been impossible to bring the heavy guns up from Balaclava, but for the last four or five days we have had the most lovely warm spring weather imaginable; the consequence is, they have been working hard during this change of weather in bringing the guns up, and to-morrow the French will have 150, and the English 60 pieces in position, but then we shall require twelve days more to bring up sufficient ammunition to keep up a continuous fire. I leave you to judge what kind of work this will be when I tell you that one single 13½-inch shell weighs 2 cwt. I hope, however, we shall get into this place before the year is out—and what shall we do then? . . . the future seems too obscure to be looked into. We have suffered sadly from sickness during the inclemency of the past month, and officers and men are literally worked to death. . . . If we can only take this town and then get a little rest we shall do very well. . . . My mother mentions a parcel she has sent me. I have not yet received it, and probably never shall; unless parcels are sent by land and delivered personally, there is little or no chance of their being received. . . .—Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Mrs. Melvil Wilson

BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *December* 21, 1854.

MY DEAREST LOU,— . . . I began a letter to you yesterday, when I was on outpost duty with my company, but was interrupted just as I had begun it by observing some movement in the enemy's camp, and as our business when on this duty is to observe every movement of the enemy, however minute, and report it at once if necessary, I was obliged to leave off the conversation I was having with you, and devote my attention

to our friends across the valley. The movements of the Russians turned out to be for the purpose of making [? *meeting*] a reconnoitring party of three regiments of French cavalry which were pushed forward to ascertain what the Russians were doing, when a skirmish took place of no great importance. The French had one man killed and two wounded, I believe—the Russian loss I do not know. The French, however, ascertained what they wanted—namely, that the Russians were quite inactive in their camp, and apparently intending to remain so,—and then returned home. . . . I do not think that the siege will be renewed till near the end of the winter. In the meantime I think that there are other causes operating in this delay. Omar Pasha is landing at Eupatoria with 40,000 men, where he will probably be joined by 20,000 French (for they say the French are to be reinforced by 60,000 men), in which case the allied army would probably advance from Eupatoria upon Sebastopol or Batchki-Serai, cut off the supplies and act upon the rear-covering army of Sebastopol, in which case the Russians in and out of this town (supposing this manœuvre to be successful) would be forced to capitulate. Under any circumstances the Russians round this place must detach a strong force to watch Omar Pasha, when we ourselves might be able to cut off all supplies from coming into the town, and I therefore think we now are waiting till Omar Pasha is prepared to advance before we recommence the siege. On the other hand we hear that Omar Pasha is enabled to come to the Crimea in consequence of Austria [32] having signed a treaty on the 2nd December, defensive and offensive, with England and France ; and rumours go so far as to say that this step of Austria's will lead to peace. . . .

. . . The walk along the edge of our heights is, I assure you, a charming resource. I am generally there to see the sunrise, which on some mornings, particularly lately, has been well worth the trouble. We have only had one slight fall of snow, and very little frost, our

bad weather having consisted entirely of wind and rain. . . . And now God bless my dear Lou, and keep you in the same good health He has been pleased to grant me.—Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *December* 31, 1854.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . To know that I am constantly in all your thoughts is the greatest comfort I receive out here. I was flattered to find there was anything in my letter about the storm worthy of being shown to Lord John Russell. I little thought when I sealed the letter that it was destined for such an honour. . . . We are literally doing nothing, but for all that our work is exactly the same as if the siege were going on—outlying pickets, guards in the trenches, and working parties without end. This severe work is telling fearfully upon the men, and the reinforcements do little more than keep up our strength. The sick list of our army yesterday was 11,000. The men, especially the fresh draughts, who are not acclimatised, cannot stand it; they are fearfully overworked and very rarely get twenty-four hours to themselves, and this work they have to do in all weathers; night and day, or let it rain ever so hard, the work must be done. Still, I have never yet heard one single murmur or complaint, and there is no prospect of this siege ending. Many of us fancy that this inactivity is owing to political reasons, so that the taking of Sebastopol may not *embrouiller* the negotiations which we hear are taking place. . . . A strong reconnoitring party of 10,000 French advanced yesterday to the enemy's camp in our rear in the valley of the Tchernaya and found Liprandi's [33] army, which has all along been threatening Balaclava, on the point of decamping. It appears they cannot subsist in the valley, and are moving off to Batchki-Serai and Simpheropol, which is also the case with the greatest part of Dannenberg's [34]

army on our right on the Balbek. Perhaps they are gone to watch the operations from Eupatoria. At all events, we are relieved from them for the present, and Sir Colin Campbell, who is entrusted with the defence of Balaclava, will now be able to take his breeches off, which he has never done at night yet since he first landed in the Crimea. You ask about Sir Richard England.[35] He is not thought much of in his Division as a General, they do not think him particularly competent, and rather look upon him as an old woman; but it is childish to accuse him of not having been more engaged with the enemy than he has been. At the Alma his Division was placed in support of the 2nd Division, not by his wish of course, but by Lord Raglan's orders. The 2nd Division did its work without wanting the help of its support, and so it happened that the 3rd Division was not engaged; but Sir Richard could not help that. He had a particular post assigned him, and could not go skylarking all over the field just as he pleased; and again at Inkerman the attack was on the right of our line, and Sir Richard's division was on the left, nearly three miles off. In front of him is our left attack or parallel, containing 35 guns defended by a guard of 500 men; his business is to support that guard in case of attack, and suppose the Russians had made a sortie upon those trenches in large numbers on that morning, as they did upon the French trenches, and in the meanwhile Sir Richard had marched his Division three miles off, what sort of a position would he have stood in in the event of this supposed sortie succeeding? If Sir Richard England should have been at Inkerman, Lord Raglan ought to have ordered him there; but his proper place was where he actually was. As it was, he detached two regiments to the field, which was as much as he dared spare. The fact is, the *Times* not being infallible, now and then talks about matters of which it is not thoroughly the master, and instead of retiring with grace and dignity when it finds itself in the wrong, tries to justify itself by abuse, and (in this case) most

ridiculous assertions. Heaven forbid Sir Richard England from commanding the forces out here, but as for abusing him in the way the *Times* does it is both foolish and ungentlemanlike. Pray thank my mother and sisters for a parcel I received five days ago, containing some flannel shirts, two books, etc. . . . Best love to Julia and all your dear children. . . .—Your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Sister, Charlotte Augusta Stephenson

BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *January* 12, 1855.

MY DEAR GUSS,—. . . I have received a box coming from I know not whom, containing a most acceptable collection of warm underclothing, some indiarubber water [? *bottles*], with a pillow and some provisions, consisting of a German sausage, tea, sugar, and portable soup. I cannot say how thankful I am for them. . . . A better selection could not have been made. If they do not come from you, pray try and find out who my kind benefactor is, and you will much oblige me. And now that I have discharged this duty, I have another, a most painful one to perform, and that is to announce to poor Mrs. Mitchell the death of her husband. Poor fellow! I have just heard with really deep sorrow of his death at Scutari of diarrhœa on the 27th of December. He had been ill some time previously, indeed soon after Inkerman, of diarrhœa and fever; at last I thought it best to send him down to the Hospital at Balaclava, and from there he was sent to Scutari. Poor fellow! I feel his loss like that of a friend; he served me truly and faithfully for nine years, and I looked upon him more like a friend than a servant. Tell his poor wife how deeply I sympathise with her. I quite dread her hearing the news. He behaved most gallantly at Alma and Inkerman, and has died in the service of his country, having done his duty faithfully throughout. I feel sure he died a happy man. I used constantly to lend him

my Bible (——'s Bible) to read, which he often asked me for, and I know he died a good Christian. Poor fellow! I shall long remember him, but he is happy now, and his wife and child must be my care now. In the meantime I know they are in good hands, and I will take care of them for the future. Please tell William if he has any money over from what I have sent him to let her have it, and I will send her some more shortly. Please let me know about her when you next write. As for myself, I remain still, thank God, in perfect health; but our poor fellows out here are suffering sadly, and our numbers are dwindling down fearfully: you have no idea of the hardships they undergo. I am not exaggerating when I say that for weeks together I believe they have worked and slept with wet feet. However, the frost is come now, and bitter as the cold is, it is infinitely better than that interminable wet and slush we have been living in for two months. We are still perfectly inactive, although our duty is as hard and severe as if the siege were progressing. In fact, the work is much too hard for our small number, and the army is being decimated every week. However, we all manage to keep up our spirits, and if you were to judge by our laughing and good spirits you would not think us so badly off. . . .—Ever your affectionate brother,

FRED.

To Lady Stephenson

BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *January* 21, 1855.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Since you last heard from me I have left the camp on the heights, and am now snugly ensconced in a cottage at Balaclava; for the Paymaster of our Brigade has gone home seriously ill, and until his successor arrives, his duty is to be performed by a committee of three officers, one from each battalion, and of whom I am constituted the working partner, a duty I most cheerfully accepted, for it takes me away for a time from the discomforts of camp, and gives me a roof over my head, the luxury of which is more enjoy-

able than I can tell you. I came down here the day before yesterday, where I shall remain a month or six weeks, so that I have at last taken my clothes off, and slept in a bed for the first time since the 14th of September, and the only time I have ever had my coat off my back has been for a general wash (a very rare occurrence) or to change my underclothing, so that I now feel clean, respectable, and very comfortable. My cottage consists of two little rooms, formerly the property of a fisherman: one, my office where the clerk sleeps, about 12 feet square, and the other my bedroom, a little smaller, both excessively clean, with a good complement of chairs and tables. There is a little outhouse where my servant cooks and sleeps, and a small yard where my baggage ponies stand. The first thing I saw when I first saw this yard was a tub—what a refreshing sight it was, and what a delicious bath I have had in it each morning! The life I have been leading lately makes one appreciate to such an exquisite degree the ordinary comforts of life that I believe I should almost jump out of my skin with joy if I were to be told that (as far as a house is concerned) I were to spend the rest of my days here; so that, after all, severe as this campaign is (and I believe you will hardly find its equal in history), it has at all events taught one moderation in one's wishes and due appreciation of the good things of this life. Inaction is still the order of the day here, and with the exception of constant sorties of the garrisons upon the trenches, and almost invariably upon the French trenches, because they are nearer to the town than ours, we never come in contact with the enemy, nor could we just now while the winter lasts, for the country is impassable for guns and cavalry, and almost for infantry. Still, these sorties don't take place without loss of life on both sides, and with the exception of the annoyance they cause, never lead to any result. The enemy are invariably repulsed, and with the exception perhaps of now and then a trifling and only temporary advantage they lead to nothing; their object is evidently to

annoy us as much as possible, with the hope of so disgusting us with the siege as to induce us to give it up, and with this view they have erected batteries against the covering army wherever the nature of the ground will admit of it, which play now and then upon our outposts, but these batteries have never yet been answered except with silent contempt. When the spring comes, however, I suppose we shall begin another campaign, though where our troops are to come from is more than I can tell you. Our army is gradually vanishing, and by the spring we shall hardly have any men left. I will give you an instance or two. The 63rd are gone, they have disappeared; this regiment, 25 strong, marched into Balaclava yesterday with their colours, *en route* to Abydos, to try and recruit their sick. Our own Brigade, which when at Aladyn numbered upwards of 3000 bayonets, and has received since then reinforcements to the extent of about 900, can only muster to-day 740 men fit to take the field, and this number, 740, will daily diminish. The remainder are not of course all dead (nor with the 63rd either), but if not dead they are all seriously ill or wounded. I do not suppose we shall see any of them again, at least I hope not for their sakes, till the spring has well commenced. When you write give me all the *authentic* political news you can; we hear constant rumours about the negotiations, but we are so thoroughly saturated with what is vulgarly called "shaves," that we never believe implicitly any political news but what comes from England. In fact, ludicrous as it may appear, I have for the first time become acquainted, through the *Times*, with what we are sometimes doing our own selves out here, which but for the newspapers I had never known. I recollect, for instance, once reading in the *Times* that the majority of the troops that fought at Inkerman from break of day till near dusk had done so with empty stomachs, not having tasted a morsel from dinner on the 4th till after the action on the 5th, which was perfectly true, and was the case with me

as with several others, but I was not aware of it till I read it six weeks later in the *Times*, when I was surprised at my abstemiousness. However, joking apart, many more important facts going on out here have come to our knowledge through the papers. . . . —Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

P.S.—I hope Augusta received my letter announcing the sad news of poor Mitchell's death. . . . Poor fellow! I shall long remember his faithful services. Remember me most kindly to his poor wife, and tell her to let me know what she would like me to do for her. . . .

To Lady Stephenson

BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *February 2*, 1855.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Your box has at length arrived with Mrs. Phipps's [36] presents, and most thankful I am to you for it; everything it contains is of the utmost use to me, and the case of brandy is really a most liberal present. Pray thank my sisters most heartily for their contributions. I am now, thanks to you all and Rivers, so well provided with all I want that I shall not require any further supply for months to come, but I will be sure to write to you whenever I do. It gave me such pleasure to undo the box and unfold all the packets, and dear Minny's little bits of holly quite affected me. You may fancy that it would have been better if your box had come sooner, but I assure you it is not so; for as far as the candles and eatables go, they would by this time have been consumed, whereas I have now got the use of them. The books are particularly acceptable, and the Army List was a very thoughtful selection. . . . You ask me how we managed to be surprised the morning of the battle of Inkerman. The previous night and that morning were very foggy, and the enemy thus made his preparations under the greatest advantage, and then the outlying pickets furnished by the 2nd Division, and

whose business it was to give timely notice of any important movement on the part of the enemy, were certainly on this occasion very remiss in their duty, for although they could not see far owing to the fog, they plainly heard during a considerable portion of the night vehicles of some sort moving along the road under their posts. This noise, which they took for market carts going into Sebastopol, should have been instantly reported to the headquarters of that Division, and if they had done this, it would probably have been ascertained that these supposed market carts were in reality the enemy's artillery being concentrated for attack in the morning. This neglect was the great fault the pickets committed and which consequently led to our being surprised ; in addition to which the sentries' firelocks were so damp with the night's rain that when the enemy was discovered some of the firelocks would not go off, and thus the signal of alarm was not given as quick as it might have been. However, our army was tolerably young at its work then, and had not sufficiently learnt that at night the ear must be trusted more than the eye. Thus the surprise was occasioned by the most unfavourable state of the weather, combined with a certain want of alertness on the part of the 2nd Division pickets. However, I do not think it is at all likely we shall ever fight such another battle, for it is not likely we shall be caught again in such an unprepared state, and, moreover, the Russians have now for a second time learnt what soldiers they have opposed to them. I shall be heartily glad when this siege is over ; one begins to feel one has had enough of it, and to hope that these negotiations may turn out successful. We shall at all events be glad of a little novelty in our proceedings which at present are rather monotonous. I understand, between you and me, that our Brigade is for the future to be held in reserve, and not brought to bear the brunt of battle, as we have done on two occasions. Pray thank William very much for his letter. . . . I cannot tell him how acceptable his political news was—that is just

the news I like to hear, and if not too troublesome of me, pray ask him to send another one very soon. . . . —Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

BALACLAVA, *February* 8, 1855.

MY DEAR MOTHER,— . . . I am still for a short time living in my fisherman's cottage at Balaclava, and now there is every reason to believe that the remnant of our poor shattered Brigade will also leave the army of siege on the heights in front of Sebastopol and come down here, not actually into Balaclava, but just outside the town and within the lines. This will be done to save the few men we have left, by relieving them from night work in the trenches, and giving them a little rest in the hope of reorganising the different battalions. Our operations seem about to recommence, and there is a talk of a general attack being made shortly; but there have been so many rumours at different times to that effect that I do not know whether to believe it. I hear that Canrobert assembled his general officers a day or two ago and told them to be prepared for a general attack shortly, and that they would very soon have to send working parties of several thousand men to make further approaches to the town. This will be done from our right, namely, the heights opposite Inkerman, of which the French have now got possession, we being too weak to hold them, and in the direction of the Round Tower, which he told them would have to be taken by the bayonet. But there again Canrobert has been in the habit systematically of making similar announcements to his troops, to allay their spirit of impatience, for they are as eager as we are to put an end to this lingering business. We were all turned out of our beds here last night by the announcement of one of our Tartar spies that Liprandi's army, 35,000 strong, had again made its appearance, and was within two hours'

march of Balaclava, intending to attack it at break of day. Our little force was assembled accordingly at four o'clock in the morning, but no enemy appeared. These alarms have been so frequent that I felt pretty certain nothing would come of it, and so turned into bed again after walking up to the front to see what was going on—and nothing did come of it. We are all very anxious to hear the result of the Congress at Vienna; some think it will lead to peace, but the majority laugh at the idea. . . . Our railway here from Balaclava to the heights is getting on capitally—in three weeks they say it will be finished. Fancy the astonishment of the Cossacks on the opposite hills when they discover some fine morning a train suddenly whizzing across the plain! It seems to everyone very late to commence such an undertaking, for surely this siege is not doomed to last for ever. The winter seems now to be entirely at an end, and for the last few days we have had charming spring weather, in consequence of which men and horses have picked up wonderfully and seem to be different beings. I hope the worst is over as far as the weather is concerned. Lord Rokeby [37] has joined the army and taken command of our Brigade. He was sadly shaken at the sight of the men, their appearance and the smallness of their numbers, and was so affected that he was unable to address the officers, which he assembled them for, the day after his arrival, but completely broke down. He said that people in England had not the least idea of the state the army was really in, in spite of all that had been written on the subject. . . . You ask me what I think of Mr. Roger's book. I think it an excessively stupid one, with nothing whatever in it, and certainly not worth being mentioned in the *Times* or anywhere else. He seems to have been treated with the same consideration and attention with which the Russians have, from all accounts, behaved towards all their prisoners, and their conduct in this respect seems a curious anomaly when compared with the way they behave in the field. . . . —Ever your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

CAMP BALACLAVA, *March* 5, 1855.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—Accept my best thanks for your letter of the 12th of February. It was the kind of letter I most like, giving plenty of political news. Peace, as you say, seems quite out of the question, and I see now that we are in for a long and serious war, as Prussia will now apparently side with Russia, and so render her assistance which will enable her to prosecute the war for years. The Sardinians will arrive here shortly, and when our spring draughts and new cavalry and artillery have joined us we shall be in a position to take the field probably about the middle of April. I cannot, however, exactly make out where we shall commence operations. The country all around us will be extremely difficult to force our way through ; mountains on all sides, every pass through which is strongly fortified, and of roads there are scarcely any. Simpheropol or Batchki-Serai would, I should think, be our first object, and I think we shall make for one or other of those towns by forcing the enemy's position at Tcherguna, which we can see he has fortified very strongly. We might get at Simpheropol by another expedition at sea, landing at Yalta or Eupatoria, from either of which places we could, I believe, make a comparatively easy march to the capital ; but such a move would be almost impossible to conceal from the enemy ; and though, as far as Eupatoria is concerned, it would not much matter his knowing it, as she is in our own possession, as regards Yalta it would enable him effectually to oppose our landing there. However, all future plans are kept strictly secret, and the more so the better, for I believe our camp to be full of spies. We have, however, on our side, organised our spies very well, and the information we now get is very full and accurate. Our Brigade is now moved down to Balaclava, and we are occupying a charming range of heights just outside the town with fine air and a most

lovely view ; our men will, I think, pick up wonderfully here, and when our draughts come out we shall be a respectable force again. The lines round Balaclava are very strong and some parts quite impregnable. Sir Colin Campbell, who is in command here, has certainly done his duty admirably in strengthening the place ; still, we have hardly garrison enough. Two thousand more men would make the place quite strong against any number of assailants. Fogs are the only things we have to fear ; they are very prevalent here in the spring, and under cover of one of them the enemy might advance in force and surprise us. But an attack under such circumstances is a difficult and a very dangerous thing for an assailant. Columns lose their way, fire into each other, and easily cause a panic among themselves. A surprise, however, is the enemy's only chance against Balaclava. We are enjoying to-day the most delightful spring weather imaginable, and this, joined with the delightful spot we are hutted and encamped on, makes one feel as cheery and light-hearted as possible. I hope, however, never again to pass a winter like the last. None but those who experienced it can have the slightest idea of it. However, it is all over now, and the recollection of it only enhances the pleasure of the present. But depend upon it the late Government have a heavy account to answer for. They have been to this army, owing to utter want of forethought, and the gross and utter ignorance they have shown in conducting a war, a far greater enemy to us than the Russians ; they have killed more men by hundreds than the enemy have ; they have, in short, done what I deem it impossible for a Russian army to do—annihilated the finest little British army that ever faced an enemy. While all this was going on I never expressed my opinion to a soul ; I used even to drive away the thoughts whenever they occurred for fear of indulging them, and thereby dispiriting myself and those around me ; besides, I don't approve of abusing authority, but now that these matters are all gone by, and the Ministry with them,

I do not think there is any harm in expressing one's opinion a little. I have given up the Paymastership and left Balaclava, and without much regret, for the confinement of my poky little cottage, after living for nearly a whole year, morning, noon, and night, in the open air, did not agree with me. . . . And now God bless you, my dear William, and bring us soon together again; with best love to Julia and the children.—Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am afraid it is a long time since I last wrote to you, but I have been seized with a sad fit of laziness, brought about by our delightful position at Balaclava—delightful in two ways, from its local beauty and the charming weather we have had, and, secondly, from the easy life we have been leading down here. No trenches and plenty of good living; our men and officers are all in huts and as comfortable as possible. Balaclava no longer looks the dirty miserable hole it was in winter; the ships are well arranged in the snug little harbour; ample wharves have been constructed; shopkeepers turned out of the town to the bazaar, a mile off, the railway all but finished, and roads constructed to the heights as good as possible; the sick in the army are recovering fast, in short, everything is *en bon train* again. Our preparations for recommencing the siege look very healthy; everything seems quite ready, and why the bombardment is delayed we cannot make out. A day has been frequently named and as often postponed for some reason, but whenever we do commence the fire on both sides will be perfectly terrific, it will be far beyond anything yet attempted in warfare. The French and ourselves open with upwards of 500 pieces, including 107 mortars, and such pieces!—many of them 68-pounders and some 25 of the mortars 13 inch. I was

in one of the mortar batteries yesterday looking at the practice, which was perfect. It is grand to witness the firing of these gigantic engines, and then to watch the progress of the enormous bomb till it bursts in one of the enemy's works. We are always on the alert down here for fear the enemy should make an attack upon this place by way of a diversion, and if he were to succeed a most serious affair it would be for us. A surprise is the only thing we are at all anxious about, for within 1¾ miles of our front runs a circular range of hills, behind which the enemy might collect during the night any amount of force he happened to have at his disposal, and then at break of day make an attack under very favourable circumstances, by avoiding under cover of the darkness the distant fire of our guns. To guard against this, we have to turn out at three in the morning and march to the lines, so as to be in position well before break of day. Our lines and position are excessively strong, and I do not think the enemy would have a chance in broad daylight. By the time you get this you will have learnt the result of the Vienna Conferences,[38] which I need not tell you we are as anxious as you can be at home to have decided one way or the other. It will be a great point gained to know what we are to look forward to, although I must say that I think peace would be by far the most rational termination to this very serious war. The French, and ourselves especially, have gained a fair amount of glory in the actions we have fought, and the Russians also on their side, in their noble defence of Sebastopol.

April 9.—Our batteries have at last opened their fires; they began at daylight this morning and have been pounding away ever since. They say the assault will take place to-morrow morning, but I cannot vouch for this; anyhow, I do not think our Brigade will take any part in it. We shall have to be on the look out here for an attack while the siege is going on; our position is just now stronger than ever, for it has been raining incessantly all day, so the valley in our front is

so flooded as to render it almost impossible for artillery to manœuvre in it. . . .—Your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

BALACLAVA, *April* 9.

To his Sister

MY DEAR MINNY,—I have treated all your numerous letters with shameful neglect, and have been sadly idle, but the change of our camp from the heights down to Balaclava has been so agreeable, the weather so fine, and the scenery so enjoyable, that we have one and all of us given ourselves up to its enjoyments and become completely lazy. You would like just to have one little peep at this pretty spot, looking down as we do from our high ground upon the quaint little harbour completely land-locked, and looking as if it would not hold a dozen fishing-boats, yet containing the finest fleet of merchant vessels ever collected together. Then between it and the sea is another high hill covered with the ruins of an old Genoese fort, and beyond one of the loveliest bays in the world, surrounded with cliffs 1500 feet high. The sunsets here are beautiful, and the light thrown on these rocks equals in beauty anything that I have witnessed in Switzerland. It is curious to see such fine scenery without a single tree to embellish it, but there is not one to be seen, although our view extends 12 or 14 miles, the hills being covered with nothing better than shrubs. The siege of Troy has now recommenced, but I cannot discover that we are making any great progress. I feel sure that this place never will fall unless we march into the country, fight a battle with the army outside and drive them away, and then by investing both sides of the harbour reduce the town by cutting off all supplies. In the meantime it is possible that peace may come, and I really think that that would be the best solution of our difficulties, and by the time you get this the result of the Vienna Congress will be known to you. You

have no idea how snug we all are in our huts ; two or three live in one together, and we are always giving dinner parties to each other. Most of us keep poultry which supply us with plenty of new-laid eggs every morning, a luxury you can't get in London, and our cookery would astonish you. In short, in comforts we have nothing to wish for. . . . I hope my mother continues well, and that poor Fan [39] is not suffering What an angel of patience she is ! All the rest of you are, I conclude, in blooming health ; and talking of blooming makes me think of the gardens at Hampton Court, how pretty they must be looking just now ! I long to see you all in your new abode, but in spite of all your hints as to seeing me some day there with a lovely *sposa*, I am afraid that prospect will never be realised. I have seen by far too much of the folly and misery of a married officer in Service ever to make me marry as long as I wear a red coat. Five out of every six married officers out here are worth next to nothing owing to their thoughts being too much centred in home. Moresom is one of the few exceptions, and he behaves like a trump. But it is sad to see (strictly *entre nous*) the sad depression of spirits I have witnessed in more than one married officer—first-rate officers spoilt. Never encourage, as long as you live, marriage where a red coat is concerned. . . . —Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

BALACLAVA, *April* 13.

To Lady Stephenson

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Our bombardment came to an end last Tuesday after nine days' firing, and without our producing any very sensible effect upon the enemy's mud forts, so I suppose we have taken another lease of this part of the country. We made a reconnaissance yesterday, which was extremely pretty to see. It was composed of about 8000 Turkish

infantry and 2000 French and English cavalry and artillery ; there was no fighting, our object being only to ascertain what force of Russians there was on the Tchernaya in the neighbourhood of Tchoogven. Only one wretched Cossack was killed, having been bowled over by a rocket sent to frighten some of those amiable beings. We only found between 2000 or 3000, but it was necessary to ascertain this, because we are so very near to the Tchernaya that an enemy in force might advance upon Balaclava during the night and be close to our works ready to assault at dawn of day, and this would be their only chance of taking this place. Our 77th Regiment did a very gallant thing last night when on duty in the trenches. The Russians had established a quantity of riflemen in some pits in front of their works to annoy our men in the trenches. The 77th were ordered to take them, which they did at the point of the bayonet without firing a shot, although exposed themselves. This has gained us ground ; and the pits being joined during the night, now form a regular trench. Poor Colonel Egerton commanding the 77th was killed, and about four other officers and 36 men killed and wounded. The Russian loss was, I believe, very severe. So much for the siege of Sebastopol, which will, so far as I can see, rival in duration that of Troy. I am now finishing my letter late at night ; there is a great deal of heavy firing going on in front, and I have no doubt the enemy is making an attempt to retake their pits. I have just heard at dinner that we have sent home for 150 68-pounders and 1000 artillerymen, so that does not look like abandoning the siege ; we are evidently in for it for another four or five months. . . . How is poor Fan getting on ? Will you thank her for me for her letter, and tell her that the young lady must indeed be fascinating that I am doomed to marry, for I have seen quite enough of married life in this campaign to prove to me that marriage and soldiering are totally incompatible. I have witnessed in this war men who

in their earlier days were marked by their activity, energy, and military ardour, but who having since married are now become more than indifferent to a Service which they used to swear by. You may depend upon it, that the thoughts of a snug fireside with a wife sitting in an arm-chair by the side of it, with your arm-chair empty on the other side, are not the best stimulants for the hardships and dangers of a campaign. And with this moral reflection I will wish you good-night, my dearest mother.—With best of love to all the girls, believe me ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

BALACLAVA, OR "THE PLACE OF FISH,"
April 20, 1855.

P.S.—Very heavy firing still going on of large guns, field artillery, and musketry, evidently a sharp affair ; you will hear of this in the papers.

To Lady Stephenson

CAMP BEFORE BALACLAVA, *May* 7, 1855.

MY DEAR MOTHER,— . . . We have received by this mail the news of the rupture of the Vienna Conference, and upon the whole I think it is much the best for the interests of the world that the war should continue. If peace had been the result of these Conferences, I do not think it would have lasted long. Russian ambition is evidently as domineering and as unsatisfied as ever. She would have seized the first opportunity, or perhaps have made one, to renew hostilities from the same ambitious motives, and during the temporary lull would have used her best endeavours to disunite France and England, so that in the next war she might have it all her own way, whereas now the two nations are more firmly united than probably any two have been in all history. Our troops work together with the best possible goodwill, and are animated with the best possible spirit, and I think the

campaign will commence under the best possible auspices. May it end as I hope it will begin! An expedition sailed from here last Thursday, consisting of 3000 French and 3000 English, the whole commanded by Sir George Brown, together with the two fleets. Their destination was Kertch, which was to be taken so as to allow our smaller steamers to pass freely in and out of the Sea of Azoff, the entrance to which is at present commanded by this fort. The success of this expedition would, it was thought, have been of great service to our future operations, as it is believed that the enemy now draw their chief supplies from the Don and Volga across the Sea of Azoff and along that narrow strip of land that separates it from the Putrid Sea; however, when the ships were within an hour of Kertch, a steamer suddenly arrives with an order from General Canrobert for the expedition to return to Kamiesch forthwith, which the Admirals did accordingly. This order came originally from the Emperor at Paris by the electric telegraph, by which means the intention of the expedition was communicated to Paris a day or two previously, and before the ships reach their destination the whole affair is countermanded from Paris. Is not this wonderful? But what appears to us more wonderful still is that the expedition should have been stopped at all. Nobody can understand the reason of such an order when there was every prospect of success, and that such an important one. However, I for one am perfectly satisfied that there not only is a reason but a most excellent one, although I confess I am very curious to know it. We are all in excellent health and spirits, and anxious to commence operations. I think we shall have tough work now and then, but feel pretty confident of success in the end. I do not think the Russians will ever outnumber us in the Crimea, as they will find it impossible to feed more than a certain number of men, whereas we can feed an unlimited number. Of course, our difficulties will increase as we advance from the

sea, while the enemy's will decrease. I was delighted to hear of the reception we gave the Emperor and Empress [40] in England, for I think it will do an immense deal of good. It will flatter the French national vanity, and there is nothing so conciliating to a Frenchman as that, except perhaps flattering his private vanity. Our Sardinian allies are not yet arrived, and I cannot make out why they are so long. They will be very acceptable when they do come, and we expect great assistance from them. . . . You can have no idea how comfortable our huts are; they will be more serviceable against heat than against cold, for they are delightfully cool. Promotion is going on very rapidly in our regiment, and I am already, within a year, more than half-way up the list of captains. . . . Send me out the best map you can procure of Russia, and another of Europe. I should like the best; as they may be rather expensive let me know how much they cost, for recollect I am a rich man now. How lovely your gardens must be looking now. . . .—Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

P.S.—I have just heard the reason of the recall of the Kertch expedition; it is not a good one, nothing can be worse. The Emperor knows nothing about it; an order was simply sent from Paris for all available ships to be sent at once to Constantinople to bring away troops for the Crimea. The fleets, however, were on their way to Kertch, so Canrobert rides off at once to consult with Lord Raglan, who, after a long talk, persuades him not to recall the expedition. Canrobert rides home, but an hour after Lord Raglan receives a message saying that he has changed his mind and recalled the fleet. There's a General for you! there's a man who doesn't feel responsibility! there's decision of character! there's common sense! And this is he who is in command of an army of 100,000 men and whose object is the conquest of the Crimea!!!!

To Lady Stephenson

My dear Mother,—We have had a great deal to interest and keep us alive this last week, and though you will have heard by telegraph most of the particulars, I dare say you will like to hear a few remarks of my own. On Tuesday and Wednesday nights the French fought a severe action between their own and the Russian works, and although they lost a great number of men, nevertheless they succeeded in the object of their attack and gained a most important success in advancing their works very considerably nearer the town, and as we did the same thing in our works during their fight, the siege has made good progress in consequence. On Wednesday morning the Kertch expedition sailed, and while, on the following day, Her Majesty's birthday was being duly celebrated in England, it was done full honour to out here by one of the most charming successes possible. Kertch and Yenikale were taken possession of without firing a shot, the only casualty arising from a drunken French soldier, who, in trying to break in the door of a house, accidentally discharged his firelock, which killed a Highlander and wounded his rear rank man. The following day 18 pennants of the allied squadrons were floating in the Sea of Azoff, this squadron being ordered, I believe, to proceed to the mouth of the Don and burn and destroy everything they came across. They say there are 300 merchant ships that have taken refuge in this sea; the destruction of these vessels will be a great blow to Russia, and if they can manage to destroy Tuganrog and a few other places on the sea, it will be a great thing. We have just dispatched Colonel Dixon, of the Engineers, with twenty heavy guns to build a fort on the Asiatic side of the Straits of Kertch to protect the passage. The Russians had built their fort of Yenikale (or New Fort) on the European shore, but there is a deeper channel close under the Asiatic shore, and

that is the one we shall use.—Since writing the above I have learnt that Colonel Dixon and his twenty guns are not going to Kertch ; their destination is Anapa or Soujak, so that by the middle of June, or perhaps sooner, you may expect to hear of great events in that part of the world. The other event of importance in the week is a change in the position of the allied armies, who, instead of being cooped up in the heights before Sebastopol, now occupy the line of the Tchernaya. This move has given us a considerable extent of new ground, and we can now ride about over some of the loveliest country in the world. During the whole of the winter and up to last week our rides were limited to going into Balaclava from the heights and back again, but now that we have advanced to the Tchernaya and driven back the enemy all this accession of territory is ours. The country is most beautiful, mountainous and beautifully wooded, with one or two such beautiful valleys ; but the most charming part of the whole is the ground itself, which is covered with a profusion of wild flowers of such luxuriance and beautiful colours as I had no idea existed. You would be in raptures with the sight ; and when riding home towards evening, as the setting sun lights them up, it really seems nothing short of profanity to tread them under foot. This is really very sentimental, but you know my love of scenery, and when one is allowed to revel over such beautiful ground, after being cooped up for a whole winter upon a barren and very confined space of ground, suffering any amount of misery and wretchedness, I leave you to judge of my delight. The climate of the Crimea, in spring, at all events, appears to me to be perfect, and as we are now supplied with everything we want, we are as merry as crickets, and living as we do amidst such exciting and instructive scenes, our lives are as happy as they can be away from all one's family. You see what a spirit the successes of the last week have given us. And now God bless

you, my dear mother, and bring us soon together again. —Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

BALACLAVA, *May* 28.

P.S.—The French loss on the 22nd and 23rd, which I have written about, amounted to 40 officers and 2000 men, killed and wounded; the Russians left on the field on the night of the 22nd *only* 1500 dead, and their total loss on that night is estimated at 6000.

To Lady Stephenson

CAMP BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *June* 25, 1855.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I had intended writing to you rather sooner than this, but have been rather out of sorts lately, owing to our failure in last Monday's assault. The Kertch expedition, with the subsequent assault and capture of the Mamelon and quarries in front of Sebastopol, had put everyone into such high spirits that the reaction, owing to our failure last Monday, is the more keenly felt, and a bitter disappointment it was. We had all been told from Headquarters and other high authority that success was certain; that the arrangements for the plan of an attack were so perfect that they must succeed; whereas, when put to the test, they turned out to be so execrably bad that failure was inevitable. Our Division had been recalled from Balaclava to act as reserve, but owing to our ill success we were not called into action. We were intended to have been used in following up the success of our storming parties, and of keeping order in the town after the capture. The disgust of the army is great, and equals what was experienced after Inkerman. To suffer the heavy loss we did, and yet have nothing to show for it is a great trial to us all, but I hope we shall succeed yet. The French got into the Malakoff Tower at one time, but the five remaining line-of-battle ships which the Russians have still preserved opened such a fearful fire upon that work that it was im-

possible for them to hold it. Before they make a second attack it will be requisite to destroy those ships, or, at all events, to make them keep a greater distance ; they are erecting a battery for that purpose, and we are looking with great interest to its opening fire. The works that our troops were put at I defy any soldiers under heaven to accomplish. We are now doing what should have been done before making that attempt ; we are pushing our works well forward, and are approaching the place under cover, so that when we next attack we shall not have from 300 to 800 yards of open country to run across from the time we leave our trenches till we get at the enemies' works, exposed the whole time to a fearful fire of grape and musketry, which was the case last time ; in addition to which our advance was impeded by an almost impassable abattis, with a ditch beyond 18 feet deep and from 20 to 30 broad. However, better luck next time. In the meantime we have resumed our work in the trenches (having left Balaclava for good) ; we have now had nine months of open trenches, the most trying work a soldier can undergo, an event quite unheard of. My health is, I am glad to say, as good as ever, and I am presumptuous enough to think I am acclimatised. This is a short, shabby letter, but I do not feel much in a humour for gossiping. I hope my next will bring you more cheery accounts. . . .—Your affectionate son,

FREDERICK STEPHENSON.

To his Sister, Fanny Stephenson

CAMP BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *June* 25, 1855.

MY DEAREST FAN,—What an ogre of a brother I have been never to have written you a line yet, and to have treated with such apparent indifference the numerous silent appeals you have made to draw a few lines from me. You know, however, how grateful I am for all the letters I have received from you, which, together with the others I receive from home, keep

me so completely *au fait* of what is going on. What do you think of our failure on the 18th? I am afraid it must have acted as a sad damper to all your spirits at home, as it has to us out here. You can have no idea how depressing a reverse is to an army in the field. Success, or a well-founded hope of it, is the food that keeps a soldier's body and soul together, and whenever that is denied for a time the state of one's mind is anything but amiable. We have left our snug quarters at Balaclava, and are again working away hammer and tongs in the trenches, where, for twenty-eight consecutive hours, we have to lie down under the parapet, passing the night in constant readiness to repel an attack, and the day exposed to a scorching sun and cartloads of dust, the whole time under a fire to which any rash exposure would probably bring you on the broad of your back. Three nights ago this agreeable duty fell to my turn. I had the command of the reserve in the trenches of about 1000 men. We had a false alarm during the night—firing was suddenly heard close to us, followed by shouting from the Russians; soon all was comparatively quiet again; still, we had to stand to our arms, and this is the state of constant readiness the mind has to be in the whole night, which, for a continuance of nine months, produces a fatigue of mind I can't describe. But to turn to more cheering scenes—when I was at Balaclava I made a most charming trip in a steam yacht along part of the south coast of the Crimea. Lord Ward,[41] who is out here as an amateur, asked a small party to accompany him, and a more delightful day I have seldom passed. We kept close inshore the whole way, and managed to get as far as Cape Aiyée, about ten miles east of Yalta. It is a lovely coast, and in one or two places the scenery is as fine as anything I have ever seen in the Tyrol. The whole coast, as far as we went, was of a similar character to the Undercliff in the Isle of Wight, but on a considerably larger scale. The view inland was limited to about from 8 to 10 miles, when it was bounded by a range of perpendicular hills

rising to about 2000 feet above sea-level. The vine is cultivated here to a great extent, and little else, and the whole coast is covered with beautiful country seats, Alupka being the name of Count Woronzoff's place—a curious mixture of every style of architecture under the sun, but very picturesque and surrounded with beautiful woodlands. The most lovely spot along the whole coast is Yalta. I have never seen a prettier spot in all Switzerland. In short, the beauty and tranquillity of the whole scene was so refreshing to the mind that it made one appreciate its merits the more fully. . . .—Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

CAMP BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *June* 29, 1855.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—Your letter of the 12th has reached me. What events have happened since you wrote it! The last shabby note I wrote you on the 16th was written when we had just received the order to march to the front, to take part in the assault on the 18th, and I believe the whole army to have been then impressed with the conviction that we should be perfectly successful and that we should at last bring the wearisome siege to a termination; such, I know, was the opinion which the Headquarters people instilled into us. They told everybody that the arrangements were so good that they must succeed, whereas it is now palpable that the assault under the circumstances ought never to have been dreamt of, and the attempt was nothing short of folly and ignorance. I'll defy troops of any kind to have succeeded, and what a fearful loss has been the result! The Redan, which our troops had to attack, is so commanded by the Malakoff Tower hill that it must of itself fall into the hands of whichever party is master of the latter work, therefore there was no use attacking it except as a feint or diversion to draw off the enemy from the Malakoff while the French

attacked it; but I am certain this was not the original intention. Then there appears to have been a fearful mistake in altering the hour of attack. Six o'clock in the morning was the hour first fixed upon, which would have given us three hours' bombarding previous to assaulting; but the night before Pélissier [42] alters the hour of attack from 6 a.m. to 3 a.m., thereby dispensing with the three hours' bombardment, inasmuch as it is not light enough before 3 a.m. to fire with sufficient certainty. The army has felt this failure very deeply, and literally now looks upon the siege as interminable, and another winter in the trenches before Sebastopol as a dead certainty. In the meanwhile our losses on the 5th and 18th are most serious, independently of the few we lose regularly every day in the trenches, thereby depriving us by little and little of our remaining old soldiers, men that cannot be replaced, and of officers whose experience, zeal, and courage are not to be surpassed. The fact is that a grave and inexcusable fault lies with the English people in ignoring as they virtually do, in time of peace, the existence of a standing army, reducing it in every department to the lowest possible state, and yet engaging in a Continental war on a gigantic scale. Are two such lines of policy compatible? And what is the result? That at the end of the first war, after nearly every regiment has been marched to the scene of action, there is scarcely an old soldier left in England. The war was entered into without any reserve being left at home, and thus the army out here found itself called upon to perform duties in the autumn and winter which should have been entrusted to three times its number. The men were worked to death. Then again, if the Army Medical Department, the Commissariat, and the Land Transport Service (which latter never existed at all) had been kept at all times upon a sufficiently decent footing to admit of a rapid expansion when war really broke out, we should not have lost half the men we did. Our army at starting should have been twice the strength it always

has been—200,000 instead of 100,000 men. The saddle should be put on the right horse, and instead of throwing blame upon staff officers, John Bull must take it upon himself. It is all very well to accuse them of inefficiency in this or that respect, but if you don't give them the proper means they can't do what is expected of them. It is too late to increase our army and organise all the military departments after the war has broken out. Will the country ever take this lesson to heart and profit by it? I doubt it. I think that the danger over and peace declared, peacemongers and narrow economists will again bring back things to their former state. Poor Lord Raglan's death has affected us all very much, and preceded as it has been by the death of General Estcourt and the reverses of the 18th, will be I dare say not less keenly felt at home. He was much beloved by all of us out here for his excellent and amiable qualities, but as Commander-in-Chief I doubt if his loss is considered irreparable. Till his successor replaces him our operations will probably be at a standstill. In the meantime the French are sapping up to the Malakoff, and are moreover constructing a casemated battery out of the solid cliff near [*illegible*] Bay to ply the shipping with red-hot shot. These ships materially interfered with our successes on the 18th. . . .—Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

P.S.—I wish when my medal and three clasps are ready you would get them from Moncrieff [43] and ask my mother to keep them for me. I do not want to have them sent out to me, but perhaps instead you could get for me 5 or 6 inches of the ribbon that I may wear some on each of my coats.

To Lady Stephenson

July 7, 1855.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Just one line to tell you of my luck. I am appointed Military Secretary to the new Commander-in-Chief out here, General Simpson.[44] This

appointment is the more flattering as it was totally unsolicited by me or anyone who takes an interest in me. Lord Raglan (so General Simpson told Lord Rokeby the other day) had mentioned my name to him on three different occasions should he, General Simpson, be ever in want of assistance—adding that he had never heard anything but good of me, that I had been out the whole time, seen everything, and always been well, so you see how complimentary I feel this appointment. Then the congratulations of all my friends, who declare it to be the best selection that could be made, together with the thought of the pleasure this news will give you all, has made me feel happier than I can tell you. My pay will be increased to about £400 a year. William will tell you what the appointment is like. . . . It is as much as I can do to write this, not being very well from an attack of dysentery, but from which I am getting all right.—Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

H.M.S. *Agamemnon, July* 21.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am still on the sick list; . . . you can have no idea how difficult it is to rally in this climate. I have left the camp for a time, and am now staying for change of air on board the *Agamemnon*, Sir Thomas Pasley. I was to have gone on board the *Tribune*, Captain Drummond whom I know extremely well, but suddenly he received orders to sail for the coast of Circassia, and so he handed me over to his friend Sir Thomas Pasley, whose kindness and attention although an utter stranger nothing can exceed. It appears, however, he knows something of us, and through whom do you think? Through the Aunts at Kensington.[45] He married a niece of General Wynyard, and seems to have been at the old palace a good deal; he is a man under forty. This illness comes at a provoking time, just when I have got the new appointment and which I

ought to be working at now. My additional pay will not be so much as I told you at first; it will be about £300 a year, and the first year will be almost entirely absorbed by the expense of my outfit. I think we are all beginning to get heartily sick of this war, Army, Navy, and everybody. I see no prospect of a satisfactory termination of it, and should heartily rejoice at a peace. . . .

July 31.—I am still convalescent on board the *Agamemnon*, and am getting better every day. This climate does not help me at all, and although I am at sea the air is far from being bracing; this is certainly one of the greatest drawbacks to invalids in this part of the world. I long to be at my work, but I am afraid another week must elapse before that will be the case. I have literally nothing whatever to tell you, and you may easily imagine how utterly void of incident my life is just now; in fact, I only write these few lines in case you should be anxious to hear how I am; but I am all right now, and only want time to give me strength again and set me to work. . . .—Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Don't tumble off your chair when you read what is coming, which is to tell you that I start for England to-night for the recovery of my health, and shall probably be with you at Hampton Court quite at the end of the month, and hope to stay with you four or five weeks. My illness has never been serious, but has completely prostrated me. I cannot get well out here—nobody can. . . . General Simpson has kindly given me unlimited leave, and my appointment will be kept open for me. . . .—Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

H.M.S. *Agamemnon*, OFF SEBASTOPOL,
August 7, 1855.

To Lady Stephenson

SEBASTOPOL CAMP, *November* 16, 1855.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have just this moment arrived at the old camp ground before Sebastopol, but I am sorry to say that I have no good news to tell you. I have come out again upon a wild-goose chase, and should not have been sent for at all. General Simpson's telegraphic message, which made me come back as soon as I did, was sent under the impression that he was going to retain the command of the army for some little time longer, the Government as usual not being able to make up its mind on the subject, so that I have come out here for nothing. I am not to be appointed Military Secretary, and shall therefore join the battalion out here and go on with my duty as usual. Pray do not be disappointed at this news, for I assure you the thoughts of this will only make me feel annoyed myself. After all, as Mr. Micawber says, " something may turn up." We had a pretty fair passage coming out, but after what I have just written I do not suppose a description of a voyage will much occupy your attention. I have arrived in first-rate health, and look forward with great delight to seeing my old comrades again. I will write to you again by the next mail, therefore you must excuse this hurried scrawl till then. . . .—Your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

CAMP BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *October* 20, 1855.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I hope you have received the letter I sent you last Saturday telling you that Sir W. Codrington had appointed another Military Secretary in my place, namely, his own brother-in-law, Lieutenant-Colonel Blane, who married a Miss Ames, sister to Lady Codrington ; he could not have been expected to do otherwise. Nothing could have been kinder than his manner was to me when I arrived at Headquarters. He expressed

his regret at my having been sent out in the most feeling manner, and asked me what he could do for me, so that I dare say I shall be offered something before long. . . . Pray do not allow yourself to be distressed, . . . as I hinted in my last, my own equanimity is worthy of the philosophers of old. I took a most interesting walk yesterday over the Mamelon, the Malakoff, and the Karabelnaya suburb, including the celebrated docks, which are an extremely fine work. It is, however, being mined in all directions, and the mines will not be completed for another month, although the sappers are working at them every day. I should think that at the end of that time they will explode them. It seems rather barbarous at first sight to destroy such beautiful works, which must have cost millions to construct, but considering that they formed part of a gigantic plan for conquest, and never can be used for any legitimate purpose, it would be folly to leave them untouched. The interest I felt in going over the Russian works and wandering among the trenches where such wonderful scenes had taken place, and from which I had so often looked with such longing and sometimes half-despairing eyes upon the town which seemed as if it never would be ours, and then to walk into the very town itself and find no enemy there, is really more than one can realise. The destruction of the town is more complete than if you had employed thousands of workmen to pull it to pieces. You cannot picture to yourself, and I am sure I cannot describe, the utter desolation of the place, which in spite of one's feelings of triumph produces a melancholy you cannot shake off. There was hardly a soul to be seen in the part of the town I went through which is in possession of the English. Beyond a sentry walking about here and there, and one or two Zouaves looking about to see if there was anything worth taking, there was not a living thing to be seen, except perhaps a rat, with which the town is filled, started from underneath a heap of bloody rags and filth ; and to add to the picture, just as we were leaving the town at dark, and passing

through the principal Place, we were startled by the screeching of an owl perched on the blackened sill of a window, which I think impressed me more than anything with the idea of utter ruin and desolation. There is not a house untouched, and hardly a single roof remaining, and even these are pierced with round shot and shell ; some of them have nothing but part of the walls standing, and you might look in vain all over the town for a single window. The docks, instead of being filled with ships or water, are devoid of both, the bottoms of them being covered with weeds and grass, and the only noise that disturbs this desert is the occasional whistling of a round shot, or the bursting of a shell, which the Russians still fire into the town from the north side. I am afraid I have given you a long-winded, prosy description, but you say you like knowing my thoughts when I write, so I have been putting them down as if I were talking to you. The final attempt on the part of the Fleet at annoying the enemy in the Sea of Azoff has been a most important one. The amount of cornstacks destroyed by them was so great that if it had been all collected close together it would have covered a space of 4 square miles. The corn was extremely fine, and almost all the straw was cut off close by the ear, which will give an idea of the incalculable mass of corn our friends over the way had collected for the supply of their army. The squadron were about to destroy another collection of ricks, but the Austrian Consul interfered, hoisted the Austrian colours over them, and declared them to be the property of his country, so they were spared. I think they ought to have been destroyed with the rest, and then compensation made to the Austrians, for the corn is sure to be used by the Russians. . . .—Ever your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

P.S.—The weather is lovely. Such a contrast to twelve months ago !

To Lady Stephenson

SEBASTOPOL, *December 7*, 1855.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—. . . Our time is now occupied in hutting and making ourselves comfortable for the winter. Not quite half our Brigade, officers and men, are in huts, the remainder still in tents and likely to be so some time longer. We cannot get huts quick enough, and the winter will be half over before they are all up. The officers' huts are comfortable enough, though they let the water in by bucketfuls, but it has been an occupation for us to try and make them watertight, in which some have succeeded ; they are, however, not so well made as they should be. There are eight rooms in one of the officers' huts ; the captains have one apiece, and the subalterns pig two together, and many of them mess together in some of their rooms, which are divided by partitions from each other, which do not go the whole way up to the roof, so I leave you to imagine the row that goes on all day long, every sound being duly communicated to every inhabitant of the peaceful retreat. Although such a state of things may not be in strict accordance with your notions of peace and comfort, it is a very agreeable one to us who are accustomed to noise. We give most *recherché* little dinner-parties, and constantly have rubbers of whist, etc., in short, we are very snug and comfortable ; and whenever a contrary idea comes across me, I refer back to last winter, when the contrast is so agreeable that it more than reconciles me to any passing discomfort. We had some very good steeplechases the other day, in which I ran my horse, which was ridden by one of my subalterns, who, however, did not win. . . .—Your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

CAMP SEBASTOPOL, *Good Friday.*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—A new toy has sprung up to amuse the British soldier and wile away his leisure

hours (which are now rather plentiful) in the Crimea. The armistice has brought us in as close contact with the Russians as ever the field of battle did. Our daily amusement is to go to the banks of the Tchernaya, which is the boundary line during the armistice, and talk to the Russians who are on the other side, and buy their amulets from them, or pipes and whips from the Cossacks. It is strange enough to be on such terms with our old enemy, and on the very ground, too, which we have both been looking at for so long without either of us daring to break upon it. The Russians cross over sometimes and go up to the French camp, and on the day the armistice was signed Lüders'[46] daughter made her appearance. Next week there are to be games open to the whole army, and the plain of the Tchernaya has been chosen for the ground. There will be horse and foot races, steeplechases, etc., and we have sent printed bills of the games and races over to the Russians, who will appear in great numbers; and to wind up the whole the French are building a large ballroom (with our planks), where friend and foe will meet again, but under more pleasing circumstances than has hitherto been the case. Tell me if you or any of my sisters would care to have some Russian or English bullets, grapeshot, etc., which have been fired. I heard that people in England are frantic about Sebastopol relics. I have got the figurehead of one of their ships if you would like to have it, and I know where a dead Russian is to be got, clothes and all; you have only got to say the word and I will get him for you at once. It will be no trouble bringing him, for he is so decomposed that I could pack him into a carpet pack with the greatest ease—he is perfectly sweet. I suppose we are all really coming home soon; the Russians seem to have had enough of it and not to like the appearance of the future, and as the French are equally sick of the war, I suppose peace will come of these negotiations. The French have been suffering awfully this winter; they don't seem to take more care of their men this winter than

they did last. They had 3000 deaths last month, and during the last winter have lost about 12,000 men, dead and invalided home. . . . I wish you and all I care for were in the same health and spirits that I am. I never was better or happier in my life, and if the war does end I am afraid I shall say, like the Prisoner of Chillon when he was released—

"even I
Regained my freedom with a sigh."

—Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

CAMP SEBASTOPOL, *March* 24, 1856.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We have had a very interesting day to-day. There was a regular Derby meeting in the Tchernaya Valley, plenty of racing and steeplechasing ; the number of soldiers present was enormous and of all nations ; the racing, however, did not afford me as much amusement as wandering along the banks of the Tchernaya, which on one side was crowded several deep with French, English, and Sardinians, and on the other with Russians, Cossacks, etc., gesticulating to each other across the river, and exchanging trinkets and all sorts of little trifles. There were some Russian priests in quaint dresses, plenty of Cossacks—Crimean, Don, and Caucasus—and a good sprinkling of officers, but chiefly of the Militia, which, I believe, composes the chief force of the Russians in the Crimea. You may depend upon it that they are very hard put to it for troops and everything else, and that they have had an uncommonly severe lesson taught them. Their making peace in the way they are doing is a pretty good proof of it. . . .—Your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

CAMP SEBASTOPOL, *April* 18, 1856.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—The last fortnight here has been a most interesting time to all of us. We are allowed to go all over the Crimea, and are profiting by the permission to our hearts' content, and you can probably hardly form an idea of the interest there is in all we see. There is much to gratify even idle curiosity, but the information and instruction to be picked up are incalculable. I would not have missed seeing what I have witnessed in the last fourteen days for anything. I have been all over the Russian positions, beginning with the north side, which is covered by forts and guarded by ravines and heights which render it impregnable. There are, however, not more than 5000 troops there now, although there are plenty of old camps. The ravines which run from these heights into the valley are most curious, and intersect them in such a manner as to render any attempt to force them perfectly useless, even if you were provided with a perfect map. The ground literally defends itself. The Mackenzie Heights are equally impregnable, and even if forced could not be held, for there is a position in the rear defended by ravines very intricate and almost impassable, which would make it almost impossible for you to hold your ground. There are about 4000 men left here; there was a large camp between this and the north side, now abandoned. The next camp is on the Belbek, formerly a very large one, from which two passes were defended, the Kordes and the valley of the Belbek, and the next camp is on the Katscha to defend that pass, and then you come to Batchki-Serai, where there are very few troops. The town itself lies hid in a narrow valley, and contains nothing remarkable. The old palace has been used as a hospital and is consequently not visible; the streets resemble those of the Eastern towns, being narrow, dirty, and badly paved, the shops low and uninteresting, with their Tartar owners

sitting cross-legged, selling trash and trumpery of every description. But the point of interest is at the end of the valley, about three miles off, where is a colony of Caryote Jews, who have been established there, according to tradition, 2200 years. They inhabit a little town of their own, perched on a rock overlooking the valley. I had a long talk with the Rabbi in German, who told me all about his sect, and showed us the synagogue. These people are a remnant of some of the lost tribes, and you will probably find an account of them in Seymour's book, or in Clarke's travels. Yesterday all leave was stopped in consequence of a review of the allied army for Lüders. He saw the French army in the morning, who mustered about 33,000 infantry. He lunched with Sir William Codrington and reviewed the English in the afternoon. We mustered 28,700 rank and file, or 32,600, including officers, sergeants, etc., besides 86 guns with 2900 artillery of all ranks, the horses being 1900. It was a grand sight and made me feel very proud, though two strong regiments were absent.

And now all this force is shortly to be broken up. It really seems a pity not to make use of it, for I think another campaign with such troops as we are now, together with the attack we should have made on the Baltic, would have told fearfully on the Russians. But I have no doubt it is all for the best. I suspect we shall leave here in about a fortnight. The Sardinians are off already, and so are some of the French. —Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

NOTES TO LETTERS FROM THE CRIMEA

[1] Fitzroy James Henry Somerset, 1788–1855, youngest son of the 5th Duke of Beaufort. Baron Raglan 1852. Commanded the British army in the Crimea, and died there in 1855, during the siege of Sebastopol.

[2] His sisters, Mrs. Henry Giffard and Isabella Stephenson, who were staying in Malta at that time.

[3] Sir George Brown, G.C.B., 1790–1865. Was at the siege of Copenhagen 1807; served in the Peninsula, at Vemeira, the passage of the Douro, and the capture of Oporto; severely wounded at Talavera; engaged hand to hand one of Masséna's staff officers at Busaco, and was at the storming of Badajoz. He took part in various actions during the retreat of the French from Spain and Portugal; was in America 1814, at Bladensburg and Washington, and then saw no further service till sent to the Crimea in command of the Light Divsion in 1854. His horse was shot under him at the Alma, and he was severely wounded at Inkerman, but recovered in time to lead the successful attack on the Redan, and commanded the expedition to Kertch and Yenikale; commanded the forces in Ireland from 1860 to the year of his death.

[4] Sir John Fox Burgoyne, Bart., 1782–1871. Son of John Burgoyne who commanded the British forces in America 1777. Lieutenant R.E. 1798; served under Sir Ralph Abercromby 1800, under Sir John Moore 1808, and distinguished himself during Peninsular wars. It was after his report from Constantinople upon the actual state of affairs that the Crimean expedition was finally decided upon. He conducted the siege of Sebastopol till March 1855, when he was recalled. He was made Constable of the Tower of London 1863, and Field-Marshal 1868.

[5] Stratford Canning, Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe, 1786–1880. Son of a London merchant; first made Ambassador to the Porte 1825, again (on a special mission) 1831, and for the third time 1841–1858. In 1833 he was appointed to Petersburg, but the Czar refused to receive him.

[6] Sir William Reid, 1791–1858, a soldier who had seen much service in the Peninsular War, and was at the capture of Paris in

1815, and later in Algiers and Spain. He was Commander-in-Chief and Governor of Malta from 1851 to 1858.

[7] Mrs. Henry Giffard had been to see her husband, Captain Henry Giffard, R.N., H.M.S. *Tiger*.

[8] His brother's wife, daughter of W. R. Hamilton.

[9] William Richard Hamilton, 1777–1859. Secretary to Lord Elgin in Constantinople 1799. Special mission in Egypt 1801. Rescued the trilingual stone of Damietta and saved the Elgin marbles after the shipwreck off Cerigo. Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 1809–1822. Minister at Naples 1822–1825. Trustee of the British Museum. Treasurer Royal Institution. A founder of the Hakluyt Society. President of the Dilettanti Society. Delivered the first Presidential Address of the Geographical Society.

[10] Walter Kerr Hamilton, 1808–1869. Bishop of Salisbury 1854–1869. Nephew of W. R. Hamilton.

[11] Erroll, 18th Earl, 1823–1891. Severely wounded at the battle of the Alma. M., 1848, Eliza Amelia, eldest daughter of Sir Charles Gore, G.C.B., K.H.

[12] George, Duke of Cambridge, 1819–1904.

[13] General Sir Henry J. W. Bentinck, K.C.B., 1796–1870. Greatly distinguished himself in the Crimea.

[14] Colin Campbell, Lord Clyde, 1792–1863. Served in the Peninsular War 1808–1813, and in the West Indies 1814. Distinguished himself at Chillianwallah and Goojerat 1851–1852. Commanded the Highland Brigade in the Crimea 1854–1855. Directed the relief of Lucknow 1857. Is buried in Westminster Abbey.

[15] His sister, Mrs. Melvil Wilson.

[16] His nephew, Sir Charles Rivers Wilson, K.C.M.G. Despite the difference of age, Rivers Wilson was an intimate friend of his uncle and always concerned with his advancement and position. In a letter from Singapore Sir Frederick acknowledges his indebtedness to his nephew with regard to the Chinese appointment, about which Rivers Wilson has written to me, " I it was who persuaded him to offer himself for service on the expedition " ; and he adds, " When the command in Egypt was offered to him he was in some doubt about accepting, and your dear father was not keen about his going. I took him myself to the War Office to report acceptance. I knew Egypt and what an agreeable position he would have, besides the opportunity of distinction."

[17] Jacques Leroy de St. Arnaud, 1801–1854, Marshal of France. He served in La Vendée 1831, was present at the assault of Constantine in Algeria in 1843, and commanded against the Kabyles in 1851. He supported Napoleon III. in the Coup d'Etat 1851, was Commander-in-Chief of the French army in the Crimea 1854, and was present at the battle of the Alma.

[18] Achille Baraguay d'Hilliers, 1795–1878. Son of a distinguished General under Napoleon I. Governor of St. Cyr 1836, was given the command of the army of Paris by Napoleon III. in 1851. He distinguished himself in the Crimean campaign, and afterwards in Italy in 1859. After the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 he was President of the Council appointed to inquire into the capitulation of Bazaine at Metz.

[19] His brother's house, now part of the Curzon Hotel.

[20] Omar Pasha, 1806–1871. His real name was Michael Lattas. He deserted from the Austrian army in 1828, went to Turkey, turned Mohammedan, and was made General in the Turkish army. He defeated the Russians on the Danube 1853–1854, and in the Crimea 1855. After two years' banishment, 1859–1861, he fought successfully against Montenegro 1862, failed to crush the rebellion in Crete 1867, and was Minister of War 1868–1869.

[21] Otto King of Greece, 1815–1867. Second son of King Ludwig of Bavaria, elected King of Greece 1833. The presence of Bavarian Ministers and the despotic nature of the government caused much trouble. In 1843 an insurrection broke out and was only temporarily quelled. Otto was finally deposed in 1862.

[22] Queen Victoria gave Lady Stephenson apartments in Hampton Court Palace, which she occupied till her death in 1861.

[23] Sir Thomas Troubridge, 1815–1867. Distinguished himself greatly at the battle of Inkerman, where he lost his right leg and left foot.

[24] Ernest Stephenson was the son of Sir Benjamin's brother John.

[25] Captain Giffard left two sons, George Augustus now Admiral R.N., and Henry Rycroft.

[26] Alexander Sergeivitch Menschikov, 1789–1869. Russian General and diplomatist, served in the Russian campaign 1812–1815, becoming General and Head of the Navy. Ambassador to Constantinople, where his arbitrary conduct was said to have hastened on the Crimean War. He held the chief civil and military command in the Crimea.

[27] On November 30, 1853, a Turkish squadron was destroyed by the Russian fleet under Admiral Nachinov in the Bay of Sinope, in the Black Sea, on the coast of Asia Minor.

[28] His soldier servant.

[29] Sir Frederick William Hamilton, K.C.B., Grenadier Guards, 1817–1890.

[30] Robert William Hamilton, Grenadier Guards, 1833–1883.

[31] François Certain Canrobert, 1809–1895. Marshal of France. Distinguished himself in the Algerian wars 1835–41–51. Commanded the 1st Division of the French army in the Crimea, and on the death of Marshal St. Arnaud succeeded him as Commander-in-Chief. He was twice wounded, at Alma and Inkerman. Owing

to differences with Lord Raglan, he resigned his command in May 1855. In the Italian war of 1859 he was present at Magenta and Solferino, and commanded the 6th Army Corps in the Franco-German War 1870, when he was defeated at Wörth and Gravelotte. He surrendered with Bazaine at Metz, and was imprisoned in Germany.

[32] In December 1854 great efforts were made to induce Austria to join the Allies, which she ultimately did, though refusing active aid.

[33] Liprandi was the Russian General who attacked the English camp at Balaclava and captured the redoubts on October 25, 1854.

[34] General Count Dannenberg commanded the Russian 4th Corps d'Armée, but was removed from his command after being defeated at Inkerman.

[35] Sir Richard England, b. 1793, commanded the 3rd Division of the British army in the Crimea.

[36] Wife of Colonel, afterwards Sir Charles, Phipps.

[37] Lord Rokeby, 1798–1883, Scots Fusilier Guards. Commanded a Division in the Crimea.

[38] In the autumn of 1853 a Conference at Vienna of the four great Powers resulted in the Vienna Note, which however Turkey refused to sign without modifications to which Russia would not consent.

[39] His sister, Fanny Stephenson, 1813–1881. A lifelong invalid, whose patient and cheerful endurance of great suffering was very remarkable.

[40] In April 1853 Napoleon III. and the Empress Eugénie visited Queen Victoria, and were warmly received by the English people.

[41] Lord Ward became Earl of Dudley in 1860.

[42] Aimable Jean Jacques Pélissier, Duke of Malakoff, Marshal of France, 1794–1864. Commanded in the Crimea under Canrobert, whom he superseded as Commander-in-Chief 1855.

[43] General Moncrieff, Scots Fusilier Guards, 1805–1869.

[44] General James Simpson is described by Kinglake as "a general officer of high standing," who was sent out by Lord Panmure with "the authority of chief of the staff at Lord Raglan's headquarters." He was instructed to report upon the fitness or otherwise of the general staff, and reported favourably in every case. After Lord Raglan's death General Simpson was made Commander-in-Chief, but though he had rendered valuable services under Lord Raglan he never felt himself fitted for the highest command, and after a short time resigned the post from motives of the best and most conscientious nature.

[45] Mary and Charlotte Stephenson. See Appendix I.

[46] General Lüders commanded the Russian 5th Corps d'Armée, and assisted in [? *conducted*] the defence of Sebastopol.

LETTERS FROM CHINA

PREFACE

LITTLE introduction is needed to the letters from China, as they tell their own story very well, but there are one or two points of interest connected with them to which attention may be called.

There were two men with whom Sir Frederick was afterwards to be closely connected in Egypt whom he first met during the years of the Chinese campaign. One was Lieutenant Wolseley, of the 90th Light Infantry, who was in the *Transit* on her voyage out, and afterwards accompanied Sir Hope Grant as D.A.Q.M.G. when he came from India to take up the Chinese command. The other was " Chinese " Gordon, whom Sir Frederick met for the first time on the occasion of the capture of Pekin.

A letter published in the *Times* in April 1913 quotes Lord Wolseley in later life as giving a more formidable impression of the wreck of the *Transit* than that expressed in these letters, and saying that they were reduced to eating monkeys on the island of Banca. The different dispositions of the two men would, however, lead to their seeing the same circumstances in quite a different light, and " monkey " was no doubt what is termed a " picturesque " expression used by Lord Wolseley, as one might refer to " cold cat " when speaking of an unsavoury sideboard at an inn. Moreover, Sir Frederick was writing home to his mother and would never make a fuss about discomforts or short rations. No doubt there was danger

to all on board, and the rations, if not including monkey, were unsatisfactory.

The question of who was immediately responsible for the diversion of the troops to India from Singapore when on their way to China has been a matter of inquiry and discussion.

The letters show that when Lord Elgin arrived at Singapore on July 28, 1857, Frederick Stephenson tried to persuade him to send all the troops landed from the *Transit* on to Calcutta at once. To this Lord Elgin would not consent, only diverting a certain contingent from their intended destination, but deciding that in future, troops touching at Singapore on their way to China should be detained and sent to Calcutta. After Lord Elgin had left, the onus of carrying out this decision for the first time fell on Frederick Stephenson, who, on the arrival of some 900 men, had to make up his mind whether he should stop them all from going to China. He did not hesitate, but sent the whole body of troops to Calcutta, feeling very uncertain as to what his own General would say on the matter, and receiving no assistance from the Governor, who apparently declined to take any responsibility. The result was satisfactory, but there must have been some bad moments of anxiety.

The notes to the China letters have been taken from the same sources as those used for the Crimean ones, but it has not been possible to get all the desired information. No doubt there were many letters of interest written to others than the family, but after the long lapse of time they are probably destroyed.

There is one passage in the letter of August 3, 1857, written to his sister, which is rather obscure. It refers to the number of men brought out by Lord Elgin in the ships *Shannon* and *Pearl*. The words and figures have been faithfully copied from the original letter, but are not easy to understand. The letters generally seem to me to be full of personal and historical interest.

May 1914. H. A. P.

CHINA—1857–1860

To Lady Stephenson

GUARDS CLUB, *Wednesday.*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—My departure will take place much earlier than I had thought. I am now ordered to start next Monday, and instead of taking the overland route, I go round the Cape in charge of troops on board the *Transit*. I tried to get off this, so as to be not so much hurried, but I could not manage it without showing a disinclination to do whatever fell to one's lot. . . .

H.M.S. *Bellerophon*, PORTSMOUTH, *Good Friday*. —You should have heard from me sooner about our piece of ill luck if to-day had not been Good Friday, and consequently a day when letters are not delivered. The account of the accident in the leading article of to-day's *Times* is so accurate that I have little more to add to it. I am very sorry for poor Chambers,[1] and do not yet know how he will get out of it; there was evidently great carelessness in allowing such a suicidal act as a ship settling on its own anchor to be even within the range of possibility. The men worked at the pumps admirably, and have behaved altogether in the most exemplary manner. I went yesterday to see the unhappy *Transit* in dry dock. The hole was about 2 feet from her keel, was 8 inches broad by 2 long; she is now repaired, and will be out of dock again to-night. She will then have to ship some more provisions, her old stock being

considerably injured by the water, as was also her powder, the whole of which was destroyed. I hope, however, that the delay will not be great, and that we may be off on Monday. What I regret most, after feeling for poor Chambers, is that we should be losing all this fine weather. When I said just now that the article in the *Times* was correct, I meant only that part which referred to the cause and all the details of the accident, and also the remark about the want of proper management on the part of the captain (which, between you and me, is to a certain extent true), but the danger talked of is their nonsense; there was none at all, and never could have been, and the idea of not using a ship because she is unlucky is equally nonsense. I have the nicest fellows on board possible, both officers and men; we pull uncommonly well together, and nothing can be pleasanter. I shall hope to find some letters and newspapers waiting for me at Hong Kong about the end of June. We all came into harbour again the other day with our tails between our legs, looking very foolish, and poor Cameron[2] began to give up all hope of ever getting to China. . . . From St. Vincent, where we touch to coal, we make for the Cape, and from there for Singapore by the Straits of Sunda, and so to Hong Kong, in all about 17,000 miles. . . .

P.S.—The sailors say our accident is entirely owing to our having a parson on board. . . . Just one line to say that we go on board the *Transit* to-morrow morning, and sail again in the evening. . . . Tell Fanny that this *Bellerophon* is not Napoleon's ship, but a new one. . . . I had a very agreeable dinner last night at Sir George Seymour's, and dine again on shore for the last time to-night. Captain Chambers, I am glad to say, retains his command; at all events, he has not been superseded yet. . . .

PORTSMOUTH, *Easter Day.*

CORUNNA, *April* 19.—We have just this minute put in to Corunna, having had rather a heavy gale in the Bay which carried away our jib-boom; besides, our rigging is so slack that during the gale the foremast was perceptibly swaying backwards and forwards, threatening every now and then to go by the board. We had a very nasty time in the Bay, with a strong S.W. wind incessantly blowing in our teeth; all our cabins had water in them, about half a foot, and the capsizes at dinner were quite ludicrous. Four days' knocking about in the Bay in a large steamer is bad luck; however, we are now repaid by being in this port for a short time, but we shall be off again this evening. . . . We are very healthy on board, and get on capitally together. Our captain is the nicest fellow I ever met. . . . This is a beautiful coast, and the day is so calm and warm—with the sound of church bells from the shore—everything seems so quiet after our knocking about. I am just going on shore with the captain. . . .

ST. VINCENT, CAPE DE VERDE, H.M.S. *Transit, April* 29, 1857.— . . . We left Corunna with a favourable N.E. wind and a calm sea, which carried us famously for five days at an average rate of 10 knots an hour, when the wind fell to a dead calm, and we continued steaming at 9 knots an hour, enjoying the whole time the most delightful weather, till we sighted St. Antonio, one of the Cape de Verde Islands, at daybreak yesterday the 28th, eight days and a half from Corunna. You can't imagine anything more enjoyable than the last ten days have been. The sea most of the time without a ripple, but always with a current of air caused by the ship's speed. I don't know which part of the day has been most agreeable, before or after sunset; the thermometer in my cabin varying from 71° to 76°. The sunsets the last three days have been beautiful. They are chiefly pleasing from the exquisite softness of the colouring, and the imperceptible manner in which one colour blends itself with another; the water is

of the same lovely blue as the Mediterranean. Tell Isabella [3] that the night before last we sighted the Southern Cross, consisting of five stars, but as yet of no particular beauty, though I believe it gets finer farther south. As to the monsters of the deep, we came across some whales the other day, and a shark, his dorsal fin being the only visible part of him as he glided along the surface of the water. The Cape de Verde Islands, which we sighted yesterday morning (Madeira we scarcely saw, and the Canaries were a long way out of sight), are a collection of volcanic rocks, mostly barren but of imposing appearance ; their outlines are beautiful and the islands are of great height, St. Antonio being about 7000 feet. We passed this and anchored two hours after at St. Vincent, where we have a consul and a coal dépôt, and where there is an excellent harbour, but a more desolate, inhospitable-looking place can't exist. Beyond a few juniper bushes confined to a small spot, there is not a vestige of vegetation to be seen, though a very small quantity of maize and beans are grown on the tableland at the top of one of the mountains, all provisions coming from the adjacent islands, which are extremely beautiful in some parts and to a certain extent productive. There are about 1000 negroes and mulattoes and 40 Europeans on the island of St. Vincent. We are now coaling and expect to be off the day after to-morrow. We got a few provisions yesterday from St. Antonio, consisting of chickens, bananas, and oranges —the two latter are excellent. These islands export coffee, sugar, salt, and oil to the amount of about £55,000 annually. We get on famously on board and the time passes very agreeably. One great luxury on board this ship is the amount of fresh water ; she distils daily about 5 tons, which is used by all on board without limit, even for washing clothes, and, which is a great blessing, for one's morning tub. We breakfast at 8.30, lunch at 12, dine at 3.30 and have tea at 7.30, the intermediate time being passed in duty, reading, and walking about, the deck being very spacious ; and the

evening always is filled up with whist, lights being turned out at 10. The course we take when we leave here is for longitude 18° on the line, we then alter our course and steer straight for Simon's Bay at the Cape, where we shall arrive some time during the last week in May and find winter there. This is the usual sailing course, taken in order to profit by the S.E. trade winds. Tell Minny I am deep in the *Voyage of the "Nemesis,"* which interests me extremely and puts me *au fait* of the events of the last war; it is the best book I could possibly have had and will be very useful to me. . . .

P.S.—When you read this I shall be half-way between the line and the Cape.

Simon's Bay, Cape of Good Hope, *June* 2, 1857. —You have, of course, received long ago the letters I wrote you from Corunna and the Cape de Verde Islands. We left the latter on the 1st of May, having had an unexpected cruise in the *Himalaya* the day previous. We went on board to see the ship, which was coaling, when suddenly she broke adrift from her moorings and floated against an English barque, which we damaged considerably, and if we had not run against her we must, I think, have gone on shore, for when the *Himalaya* let go her anchor to stop her way, instead of dropping into the sea, it fell into a large iron coal bunk which was lying alongside. So we had nothing for it but to set sail and go out of our anchorage in order to take up our moorings again properly, taking in tow with us two of the coal bunks, one of them half full of coals. We had not gone far when both the hawsers of the iron bunks got entangled in the screw, so we had to cut them adrift, but not before one of them had knocked a hole through the ship's bottom owing to the hawsers being so long that the bunks were continually bumping against the ship. We then had to cruise about to pick up the bunks, and altogether we did not get back till past 8 p.m., having started at 2; so you see

the celebrated *Himalaya* can meet with accidents as well as the much-maligned *Transit*. I am sure that such a series of clumsy accidents would never have taken place on board this ship. We have had the most favourable weather imaginable from Corunna to the Cape during the whole distance of about 7000 miles, during 44 days, arriving at midday on the 28th of May. We once got 12½ knots out of the old ship under sail alone. The last week we did not steam at all and made very nearly 200 miles a day. In fact, we have burnt very little coal altogether. The greatest heat we have had was before we got to the line, when it was up to 86°, but not at all disagreeable. Since that we have gradually been getting into winter again, and have had to renew [? *resume*] our warm clothing. . . . We could not anchor in Table Bay, it being too exposed at this season of the year, so we anchored in Simon's Bay. . . . I went to Cape Town the other day with three or four of the officers, taking Cameron with me. It is about 24 miles off ; we saw plenty of Hottentots, Malays, and niggers of every shade of colour along the coast, also several wagons drawn by twelve or fourteen oxen, the driver using those enormous long bamboo whips. We found some capital hotels at Cape Town, but you are waited upon by grinning niggers with woolly heads and receding foreheads, and you can't help an involuntary start when you see a clean plate placed before you by a mahogany hand ; in fact, one was constantly turning round in one's chair to be satisfied that neither Kreli [4] nor Macomo were standing there. . . . I had a charming ride through one of the kloofs, a ravine which gave me a capital idea of the surrounding country. But the town itself, pretty as it is and devoid of all appearance of poverty, still does not seem to be thriving ; the population is scanty, and it looks like what it is, a city that has seen its best days. Graham's Town is, I believe, replacing it in importance and is expected to be made the capital. All the troops are on the frontier, but there is no prospect of a war. The Kaffirs are

starving and coming over to us in large quantities. Our drive back to Simon's Town was more enjoyable than the one there (*sic*); we drove through miles of wild oleander and other most beautiful plants, the names of which I do not know, and the birds are very varied and beautiful—humming birds,[5] sugar birds,[6] and others with exquisite plumage, but we have seen no game. I met here the steward of the *Agamemnon* who attended me when I was ill in the Black Sea (he is now in the *Iris*), also Major Boyle, who was General Simpson's[7] assistant military secretary; it is very odd meeting old friends in such different parts of the world.—Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

H.M.S. *Transit*, SIMON'S BAY, *June* 3, 1857.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . The *Transit* has done her work very well, she steams 8 knots an hour at half power, burning a little more than three-quarters of a ton [*of coal*] an hour, and last week we sailed entirely, averaging 190 miles a day. The *Himalaya* started two days after us, and arrived three days before, but owing to the enormous amount of coal she consumes, will only leave here eighteen hours before us; she sailed at 11 p.m. to-day, and we shall sail at daybreak to-morrow, so we run an even race between us. The *Barracouta* has just arrived from China with the news of the loss of the *Raleigh*, Commodore Keppel,[8] which ran on a rock near Macao—all hands saved. . . . The Kaffirs are starving and coming over to us in great numbers, thereby giving a reinforcement of labour which is very much wanted in the colony. It appears that the Kaffir chief, Kreli, employed a *ruse* with the view of making all the tribes submit unconditionally to him. He sent a prophet among them who told them that if they would destroy all their cattle upon a certain day, the whole of the cattle that the English had taken from them, together with all their warriors killed during

the last fifty years, would be restored to them. Kreli was in hopes that when once reduced to starvation they would all come in to him and thus swell his forces. They killed their cattle accordingly, but when reduced to the most wretched state of starvation, instead of going to him they are coming over to us, and people here are really sanguine that the Kaffir wars[9] are over. I hope so. We expect to reach Singapore in about five weeks. . . . We have had no sickness on board ship what*ever*; it is capitally fitted up for troops, and the troops give me very little trouble. . . . I never was better or jollier in my life, having plenty to occupy me. . . .—Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

ISLE OF BANCA, *July* 11, 1857.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I hope you have not been alarmed at the news of the *Transit*, for we are all safe and well. We struck on a rock at 9.30 a.m. in the Straits of Banca, to the S.E. of Sumatra, on Friday morning the 10th July, about 3 miles off the shore, and 15 to the north of Minto, a town on the coast of the island of Banca. It was a lovely morning, the sea perfectly calm, and we were all hanging about the poop under the awning, gazing at the beautiful island we were passing, when suddenly we felt three heavy bumps and the ship stopped. We were on a rock of three fathoms depth, though on sounding astern from off the poop there were nine fathoms, and all round the ship six. She filled at once, the water completely covering the engines and lower troop deck in about half an hour, for it was amidships near the engines that she struck fast. The boats were all lowered immediately and filled with troops, whom we marched in with all dispatch, not giving them time to dress, so that they are mostly on shore without shoes and stockings and without one

single coat. Some firelocks, ammunition, and a few beakers of water were hurried into the boats, and off they shoved. We are now safe on shore, enjoying ourselves immensely, expecting to be sent for from Singapore in a few days. The officer who takes this to Singapore is waiting, so I must most reluctantly finish my narrative and sign myself your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

ISLE OF BANCA, *July* 18, 1857.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—I wrote a few lines to my mother a week ago, giving her an account of our accident, which was unfortunately interrupted by the sudden departure of our courier for Singapore. I have, however, a little more time to-day, and shall therefore devote it to you. In the first place, to go back several weeks, the *Transit's* difficulties recommenced in the Bay of Biscay, when, during a gale, she sprang a leak in her stern, which could not be got at, and which kept a small donkey steam-engine incessantly employed baling out the water during all the rest of the voyage. After leaving the Cape . . . we steered S.S.E. till we reached latitude 30° 30′ S., when we steered nearly due E. The first week we had very bad weather, constant gales, and a tremendous sea peculiar to that part of the world. We had then very fine weather till we passed the islands of St. Paul and Amsterdam, when we fell in with a gale which was as near to a hurricane as anything could be ; it lasted for three days. It commenced by snapping in two, like a walking-stick, our mainyard, a spar about 80 feet long and nearly two feet thick ; it then tore into shreds, literally, one foresail, which went with a bang like a cannon. We then tried to take in the fore topsail, but it was too late ; in attempting it the sail was blown clean out of the bolt ropes, and later the fore-topmast staysail was lost also. Tell Helen,[10] with my love, that the last act of the gale was to destroy one of the

ship's whiskers. We then struck our royal masts and lay to for two days. The sea was magnificently grand, and the wind so strong at one time that no one could face it ; and what with the moaning of the gale through the rigging, and the incessant thumping of the waves against the ship, we were prevented from sleeping. It was a circular storm commencing in the E. and veering round through the N. to the S.W. When the storm was over it was reported that the ship had sprung a leak, and all hands were ordered to pump, which we had to keep up, with certain intervals, for nearly a week, when the leak was patched up to a certain extent ; but if we had met with another gale she could not have stood any more knocking about, and must have gone to pieces. The leak was a most formidable one ; you could turn some of the rivet bolts with your fingers so loosened were they. The plates of iron had thus come disconnected, and then the water flowed in. When I saw it the leak was 8 feet long, and I believe it afterwards extended to more than double the length. One day we pumped out 600 tons of water. However, no further casualty occurred till the 10th of July, when we ran upon a coral reef at 9.30 a.m., about 3 miles offshore, and 12 to the N. of Minto, the capital of the isle of Banca. The men were disembarked without casualty, and as quickly as possible, and in two hours the ship's stern was completely under water, which came nearly up to the mainmast. We have been now a week on this island, and I do not think I ever spent a more agreeable time. This island is lovely, and we have made several excursions inland, and although we are under the line, the heat is far from oppressive. We are encamped in a forest which grows quite down to the water's edge, and have plenty of fresh water and good food. The natives are Malays, and there are plenty of Chinese and a few Indians, so that our market is the most motley sight you can conceive. There are plenty of monkeys in the island, and some parrots, and pine-apples, cocoa-nuts, and bananas are most plentiful. A Rajah came to pay his respects to

me the day before yesterday with a peace-offering of half a dozen pine-apples, and as many cocoa-nuts ; and yesterday another fellow came with a dozen eggs as a present, wishing to trade with us, and our market is now amply supplied. We expect to re-embark to-morrow, some ships being on their way from Singapore. The 90th will go on to Calcutta to quell the disturbances, but I think I shall go to Hong Kong, when I will write home again. . . .—Your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Sister

SINGAPORE, *August* 3, 1857.

MY DEAR MINNY,— . . . There are so many interesting subjects to write about that I feel quite an *embarras des richesses*. India[11] is the first, but you will be informed in England weeks earlier than we shall be here of all that goes on there, and much more accurately than we are. I will only tell you, therefore, that Lord Elgin[12] arrived here the 28th of July. I had a long talk with him about the disposal of the troops from the *Transit*, and wanted him to send us all on bodily to Calcutta ; he decided, however, upon sending the 300 men of the 90th and the 120 men of the 59th only to Calcutta, leaving the 200 men of the Medical Staff Corps and myself to go on to Hong Kong. He had brought with him in the *Shannon* 50, and the *Pearl* 30, about 350 marines, so that independently of the moral effect of his presence at Calcutta, with two heavily armed men-of-war, he will bring the welcome reinforcement of about 800 bayonets. Lord Elgin expects to be back at Singapore about the end of this month, and has ordered in the meantime all troops coming from England to China to be stopped here and sent off to Calcutta instead, so that there is, I am afraid, no chance whatever of any operations commencing in China this year, and am rather in hopes that General Ashburnham[13] and all the staff may be sent on to India. Sir M. Seymour[14] has sent the

Inflexible here to bring the remnant of my diminished forces on to Hong Kong. She arrived here three days ago and then went on to Banca to pick up Chambers and the crew of the *Transit*, who are still on the island looking after the wreck and its contents. We expect the *Inflexible* back to-morrow, and then we shall all go on together to China. The only troops now there are the 59th, so reduced from sickness as to be almost unfit for service, and about 500 native Indian troops. I have passed a most interesting time since we parted, and if I were talking instead of writing to you, could amuse you very much with an account of our adventures. Now that the beastly old *Transit* is gone, I can tell you that it is a mercy we did not all go to the bottom in her weeks previous to her striking. It was a daily source of anxiety to us the state she was in. At one time an engineer goes down as usual to the stokehold, and to his horror finds himself up to his armpits in water (that was off Sandown); at another time our assistant steward descends into the hold underneath our dining saloon, and *he* gets a cold bath, the water is up to his waist. This occurred in the middle of the Atlantic; the leak could not be repaired, for they could not get at it—it was somewhere between the hull and the lining of the ship; the donkey engine was set going in consequence and never left off till we wrecked. Then off the islands of St. Paul and Amsterdam, during a tremendous gale, we sprung a leak, forward this time, which I believe was more than 20 feet long; if we had met with another gale after this I don't think anything could have saved us, so we providentially ran upon a rock (not properly marked in the Admiralty chart), and our troubles came to an end. We really enjoyed ourselves thoroughly in the island of Banca, and were like a set of children playing at Robinson Crusoe. . . . We fixed upon the verge of the forest just above high-water mark and close to a capital stream of water for our camping ground, and before night we had rigged up some sails between the trees for tents, and though the men were

landed half naked and without provisions, they were all as jolly and comfortable as sandboys ; nothing could exceed their good behaviour. For the first day or two they had nothing but half allowance of biscuit and a small ration of grog ; but, after that, provisions were recovered from the wreck, the Dutch sent us a quantity of food, and the natives came daily to sell things, so that for the rest of the time we lived like fighting cocks. . . . We used to bathe twice a day, before sunrise and just before sunset, had parade twice a day, laid down and slept during the heat, and passed our spare time in cutting down trees right and left in the most strenuous manner, as if our lives depended upon it, and for no earthly purpose that I could ever make out. Then we imagined it was necessary to dam up the stream (it was totally unnecessary), and so we occupied ourselves and the men till I believe we were sorry to leave the island. Our camp was one of the prettiest sights imaginable, and I used to lie awake at night quite in raptures with the scene around. It was pretty enough in the day to see the sails suspended from tree to tree and little knots of men grouped here and there, the sea gently breaking on the beach within 20 yards ; but at night we lit enormous bonfires all round the camp to keep mosquitoes off and counteract any dampness in the air, and the effect of the flames and numberless sparks rising high into the air amongst the trees was the most picturesque scene I have almost ever witnessed. After ten days ships arrived to bring us away to Singapore, where I and the Medical Staff Corps are now staying, daily expecting to go on to Hong Kong. This is a most charming island and with a most delicious climate, the temperature varying all the year round from 77° to 87°, the heat far from being severe and with constant sea breezes cooling the air ; you must, of course, keep out of the sun, but by taking the most ordinary precautions the climate is made most enjoyable. I have been most hospitably entertained here by Colonel McLeod, commanding the forces of the Company here

and hereabouts ; he has got a most delightful house where I have been staying since my arrival here. At church yesterday a bishop preached with moustaches and a fine black beard. You must tell the Bishop of Durham.[15] It was the Bishop of Labuan,[16] who preached a very good sermon, and administered the Sacrament afterwards, when it was very interesting to see kneeling at the altar Chinamen, with their long pigtails hanging down their backs, Malays, and a Hindu with his wife, all kneeling side by side. They were very devout and received the Holy Communion with the greatest possible reverence. Punkahs work away all church time. . . .—Ever your affectionate brother, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Nephew, Rivers Wilson

SINGAPORE, *August* 6, 1857.

MY DEAR RIVERS,—A few lines are due to you as being (independently of other considerations) the first cause of my being where I am. How you would have enjoyed and appreciated all I have seen ! I don't think I have ever been happier in my life than during the whole of our voyage out here. It has been one incessant flow of excitement the whole time. Touching at Corunna, the Cape de Verde Islands, the Cape, Banca, and, lastly, Singapore, besides the different places we have sighted, have all proved a source of the greatest pleasure, and has given me a better insight into these different countries and people, etc., than reading at home all the books of geography and travels that ever were written. You will, of course, have heard long before this of the conclusion of the *Transit* drama, or, as the soldiers used to call her, the " Chance it." I am, however, so tired of repeating the same story that in case you care about hearing the details of the accident I must refer you to a letter I have written to your Uncle William by the last mail, and to your Aunt Minny by this. I will only add that our being wrecked at all was a perfect godsend ; if we had gone on to China and met with

another gale I should not be here now writing to you. The Straits of Sunda and Banca and all the Archipelago up to Singapore are extremely pretty, the islands, which are very numerous, are wooded quite down to high-water mark, with magnificent trees of great variety ; at night the land breeze was strongly scented with their perfume. The south-east coast of Sumatra is, however, not so pretty as the other land ; it is covered with jungle growing in swampy ground which runs for some miles inland and is very pestilential. Banca, where we were wrecked, is one of the prettiest of the islands, covered with jungle (or forest) like the rest, with mountainous land in the centre ; it yields an immense quantity of tin, from which the Dutch draw a net revenue of about half a million ; they were very civil to us and did everything in their power to make us comfortable. The Malays were as like monkeys as they could be, but they are a very quiet and harmless set on this island, and did not give us any annoyance. There are quantities of Chinese on the island, about 80,000, who, with the Malays, used to come every day and sell us provisions—cocoa-nuts, pine-apples, and bananas by the hundreds, and most excellent ; the cocoa-nuts furnish an immense quantity of milk, about two tumblers each, which, mixed with a little brandy or rum, forms a most delicious draught. After remaining about ten days on the island we were brought on here, where I have been a fortnight to-day. Although almost under the line, the climate is most enjoyable ; the island is very pretty and is thriving wonderfully, with a free port ; the merchants and residents are most hospitable. The other day I met a Chinaman at dinner, a very nice gentlemanly fellow, but with such a round moon face that my hand was itching to slap it all dinner-time ; he eat and drank and chatted like other people, asked me to drink wine with him, and invited me to a ball he is going to give to-morrow night, which they say will be an uncommonly good one, everyone is to be there ; he is very rich, and a justice of the peace, still, he is thoroughly Chinese in appear-

ance, with his shorn head, pigtail, linen jacket, loose trousers, and turned-up shoes. Last night I went round the back slums with the police to see the opium shops and opium smoking ; the shops are filthy, dirty holes, with benches for these devils to lie and get drunk upon. Each man is provided with an oil lamp, with which he is constantly lighting his pipe ; each pipeful costs about 2d. ; about ten of them are smoked before stupefaction commences—that is with some—for there are men who will smoke a dollar's worth in a day, but then they never live long. A Chinaman farms the whole of the opium here from Government, for which he pays £60,000 a year. This forms the chief revenue of the place, but yet does not cover the expenditure of the settlement which still costs the company something every year. . . .—Yours affectionately, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

HONG KONG, *August* 25.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have just this moment arrived at Hong Kong, having been exactly five months on my way, that is twenty weeks. . . . I am in perfect health. I have not yet seen the General, but shall be off there in a short time. . . . I cannot help thinking they will send all us staff on to India. I am looking forward to such a course rather eagerly, for there is nothing to be done here, all our troops being taken away from this expedition and diverted to India. Chambers and his crew are all gone up the Canton River to be tried. I am afraid it will go hard with him. This is a very picturesque place, but I do not mean to commit myself by a decided opinion of its merits till I have seen more of it. The harbour is certainly a beautiful one, very capacious and well-sheltered. We are completely hemmed in by rocky mountains, being only about a mile from the mainland, which is mountainous and rocky. . . . I have too much to do on first landing to scribble any longer. . . .

When you next write, find out if we are ordered for India.

Hong Kong, *September* 9, 1857.— . . . In the first place I will tell you that I have never been better in my life; the heat has not had the slightest effect upon me, neither when at Banca, Singapore, nor here. I am most agreeably surprised in this place; it is a beautiful spot with a completely land-locked harbour covered with shipping and surrounded by this island and the mainland of China, all of which is rugged and mountainous and very picturesque, though the land, or rather, rock, is very barren, and though mostly covered with grass is without a vestige of a tree except the few that have been planted in and about Victoria. The town is large, capitally built, with a great many very handsome buildings in it, and is excessively clean. I should think it contained at least 50,000 inhabitants and, considering it was only commenced in 1841, it is a wonderful place. At that time only a few fishing huts existed, which are now replaced by a large, thriving commercial city of much beauty. With regard to the heat of this place, it is no doubt very great, but it is, to a great extent, your own fault if you suffer from it. You must avoid the sun as you would the plague, and never allow its rays to rest upon your head for one second, and, moreover, during the heat of the day, sleep indoors as much as possible, avoid much wine, and either before sunrise or after sunset take a fair amount of exercise. I think that by following these rules you are pretty certain to avoid sickness, at least I have found it so. . . . You will perhaps laugh at me when I tell you that I find the climate very enjoyable, but then I am in great luck, for the house I am living in is probably the best situated in the whole town. It is built on the side of the mountain, and is about 200 feet above the level of the sea; it lies at one extremity of the town with no house beyond it, and scarcely one near it, so that we get every breath

of air and plenty of it. We are probably 6° cooler than down in the town below. The house is a fine large mansion rather than a house, of two storeys, with a spacious verandah supported by large Grecian pillars running along the whole back and front of each storey. We are five in the house—Colonel Pakenham, A.G.; Colonel Wetherall, Q.M.G.; Major Clifford [17] his assistant; a staff surgeon, Dr. O'Flaherty; and myself. We have each a very large bedroom, dressing-room and a bath-room paved with marble. We all mess together, have a capital cook, and live in first-rate style. Our own expenses are at the rate of £300 a year each, but as my pay and allowances, including my regimental pay, etc., amount to £1300 a year, you will see that I am altogether not so very badly off. I go down to my office every morning in a large kind of arm-chair with a covering to it, carried on two long bamboos by a couple of Chinese coolies; to walk there and back every day would soon lay me up. This place swarms with Chinese, who are the most hard-working, clever, useful people possible. I do not know what the colony could possibly do without them. I have been, to a great extent, re-equipped by them, for I have lost, with the exception of a carpet bag full of things, every article I possessed on board the *Transit*. I had luckily saved one cotton shirt with a linen front which I gave as a pattern to a Chinese tailor here, and for £3 10s. he makes me a dozen precisely like the pattern, and equally good, for which I paid in London £6 10s., although the cotton and linen must have come from Europe or America. . . .—Ever your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

HONG KONG, *September* 10.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . We cannot make out what is to become of us out here, and are rather expecting to be recalled. We have just troops enough here to protect the place during the absence of an expedition to Canton, and with the exception of the 1400 marines

Lord Palmerston talks of sending out, I do not see the slightest prospect of our being reinforced. The marines can perfectly well act under the orders of the Admiral without the necessity of placing them under General Ashburnham, so that under these circumstances there can be no possible necessity for maintaining this expensive staff. We are, however, beginning to look forward to the return of Lord Elgin who will probably enlighten us a little as to our future operations. . . . I was not sorry to get away from Singapore, much as I enjoyed myself there, for I found myself placed unexpectedly in a more responsible situation than I had bargained for, by the arrival there of different detachments of troops destined for China and amounting to about 900 men. These touched at Singapore, and being there it became a question as to the expediency of diverting them to Calcutta, and, as senior officer of H.M.'s troops there, it was for me to decide this point which, as you may imagine, caused me some little anxiety. Although the Governor was the proper man to send them on, he could not have done so without my sanction. I did not hesitate, of course, for one moment in deciding that they should go to Calcutta, where every European was, at that time, worth his weight in gold. But instead of the Governor making a requisition upon me for the troops, I had to urge upon him the necessity of sending them to India, which threw rather more of the onus upon me than I was entitled to. You can never tell in what light your own acts, simple and justifiable as they may seem to you, will be viewed by people at a distance, and therefore I was naturally a little anxious as to how far the General here would approve of my thus depriving him of a portion of his forces. He did approve, however, of what I had done, though, naturally, frightfully disgusted at the necessity for it, which thus deprives him of all his troops. . . . This island . . . abounds in water of a most excellent kind, running in numerous little streams down the sides of the mountains. You would be surprised at Victoria, it is such

a fine, large thriving town, only sixteen years old. . . . The island abounds in granite which is most extensively used, and is admirably quarried by the Chinese, who, instead of blasting, insert rows of wooden pegs about an inch square into corresponding holes previously chiseled out. These pegs are then saturated with water till they swell sufficiently to burst asunder the granite ; by this means a considerable amount of labour is saved, because you can thus detach a mass of granite of very nearly the form you require. . . .—Ever your affectionate brother, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

HONG KONG, *September* 25.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I conclude that you believe I am gone to India, as I have received no letters from Hampton Court by the last few mails, but I am still here and not likely to be sent on there now. Our force will be very small for operations of any kind, 1500 marines being all we have got to depend upon here, for the force actually in Hong Kong is not more than will be required to garrison the place while operations are being carried on at Canton. The force employed there will be almost exclusively naval, unless they send us out some more regiments from home. In addition to these marines the navy will be able to form a Brigade for service on shore of about 2000 men ; we —the army—might furnish about 200 of the 59th, two batteries of artillery, and 100 engineers, so that 4000 men is the outside we shall be able to take the field with ; and these are almost all navy men, so that I do not see that the staff out here is likely to be put to much use. My first impressions of this place are fully confirmed. I am very much surprised to find it the place it is, and as for the climate, I have as yet felt none of the disagreeable effects I used to hear so fearfully described. . . . The houses are large, lofty, and very airy, clothing is of the lightest conceivable description, the

rays of the sun are never allowed to touch the body, and with these precautions I can assure you that this climate is most enjoyable. There is, however, very little society here, and nobody hardly ever dines out, which I am rather glad of, for our little circle at home is so snug and comfortable that I never feel inclined to leave it. Lord Elgin arrived here last Sunday, the 20th, from Calcutta in a P. & O. steamer, the *Ava*, which he has hired, and where he intends living while he stays here. He brought very unsatisfactory news with him, but, of course, you will have heard all about India and what is even going on there, long before this will reach you. One of the Luards also arrived here on the 20th; he is Brigade-Major to General van Straubenzee; he is in the 77th and was formerly in the 3rd. He is a very nice fellow, and a very good officer. . . .—Ever your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

October 15, 1857, HONG KONG.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . We are anxiously hoping that affairs will take such a favourable turn in India as will enable Lord Canning to repay us the force we have lent him. I am afraid very few eyes are directed to the comparatively humble business we have got in hand, and every one sent out here is, of course, sadly disappointed at the insignificance of the operations which, as far as the military are concerned, will be carried out. Still I am sanguine enough to hope that before the end of the year we may receive sufficient reinforcement from India to enable us to hold Canton, for unless we can do this there will be no good gained in taking it. Our eventually leaving it will be claimed by the Chinese as a victory, and do the cause more harm than good, and it would never do to destroy it. Canton is an enormous city, supposed to contain a million of inhabitants, and could not be held with a less force than 5000 bayonets and 30 guns,

which should be distributed over the place in six fortified posts of 500 men, each with 2 or 3 guns, according to the amount you have, the remainder occupying the heights outside the town as a reserve. These posts would be perfectly safe, and would enable the General to patrol the town, and to cause such orders to be issued to the inhabitants as would leave no doubt in their minds as to who was master of the town; and this system should be kept up rigidly for some months, keeping up a strict state of siege. Nothing short of this will bring Yeh to his senses. The people generally are anxious that we should be allowed to trade as we wish, and I believe it to be only Yeh [18] (pronounced Yay) who is maintaining this war. The ruffian when he wants money actually sends agents over here to squeeze the Chinese in Hong Kong, and they dare not refuse, for he has got a guarantee for their compliance in the parents and friends of these Chinese who are still living in Canton. Is it not a curious state of things? being able to carry on the war by taxing the subjects of your enemy. If the Chinese here were to refuse payment, Yeh would instantly imprison or perhaps put to death a relation of the refractory tax-payer. . . . Will the Government take sufficient energetic steps in reorganising the army and government of India? I have always looked upon this mutiny since its very commencement as the luckiest thing that could happen to us in opening our eyes at such a favourable moment to the radically rotten state of India. But woe betide us if we neglect the warning. I long to hear from you upon the subject, your own opinion and what is contemplated.—Your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

HONG KONG, *October* 30, 1857.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—. . . As you complain that I never tell you enough about myself, I will commence with

that interesting topic. I never was better in my life, and find the climate of this place more enjoyable every day. The thermometer in the shade just now is about 78°, with a delicious fresh wind almost always blowing. We almost all wear still the lightest summer clothing, and our dress for the evening is always white from head to foot — a white jacket, white trousers, and white shoes. By the time you get this, which won't be far from Christmas Day, you will probably shiver at the very idea ; but you have no idea how nice we all look, so cool and clean. I dined with Lord Elgin last week on board his ship the *Ava*, where he lives altogether. We dined on deck, which was very nicely arranged for the purpose. Being very large, it was divided in two, fore and aft, by large flags, which were also arranged so as to form the walls and ceiling of these two rooms, in one of which we dined, the other being the reception-room—the whole covered with a double awning against heat and rain. The reception-room, where we smoked and played whist after dinner, His Excellency also indulging in a cigar, was lighted by Chinese lanterns, and the whole had a very pretty effect. He has got a very nice set of fellows in his suite, and Bruce,[19] Lord E.'s brother, the Secretary of Legation, I like particularly. I have been taking sundry long walks over this island, which is really a beautiful spot in many respects, though there is scarcely a tree to be seen ; but it is very mountainous, and though the highest peak is barely 2000 feet, I had no conception so much effect could be produced by so low an elevation. Except the racecourse, there is not a flat spot in the whole island, which is one confused mass of peaks, ravines, and precipices, presenting, however, some really fine scenery. The formation of the island is granite, and the soil is formed by its decomposition ; the granite here always decays very rapidly. As for the manners and customs of these devils, Fortune's and Meadow's books will tell you more than I can, for I have not yet left the island. The funerals, however, are the most ludicrous

exhibitions. Everyone but the priest is in white,—they are in yellow,—provisions of different kinds accompany the corpse, and in the centre of the procession is sometimes carried with great ceremony, in an elaborately carved kind of temple, a roast pig: a live pig, a live sheep if the people are wealthy, and other provisions accompany the funeral also. These are, I believe, intended to propitiate the Devil, but the priests are of course the medium of communication with that gentleman, and take care not to let him have more than is absolutely good for him. This individual they always imagine to be following a funeral, and it is their object to get the body underground before the Devil can snatch it away. With this view they scatter along the road pieces of paper—like the one enclosed, which was picked up on one of these occasions; the Devil is supposed to take these for banknotes, and as he stops to pick them up, the procession thus gains ground upon him, and so gets to the burial-ground before him. These people have no religion,[20] they worship no god, and their ceremonies merely consist in endeavours to propitiate the Evil One by offerings and burning joss-sticks. If his majesty is in a bilious or fractious humour, and they can't come over him anyhow, they get angry and frighten him with crackers and gongs. I believe this to be a summary of the Chinese Thirty-nine Articles. . . . My books are a sad loss to me, and I would give anything for a good Atlas. My military books I cannot replace here, nor indeed any of the others; there are no books to be got in the East. People seem to me never to read in the tropics. . . .—Your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

HONG KONG, *October* 29, 1857.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . You know, of course, of the changes that are about to take place in this force. Ashburnham, Pakenham, and Wetherall, with other

smaller fry, are ordered to India, and will leave on the 10th or 11th of November. By this Straubenzee [21] remains in command, with myself and Clifford as A.A.G. and A.Q.M.G. respectively, the force at our disposal remaining what it was, viz. 18 guns (field), about 400 European bayonets, and as many Madras native infantry bayonets. With this force, however, we are to co-operate with the navy against Canton in about three weeks from now. So that after leaving a small force from our present strength to protect Hong Kong, we shall have a very tiny force to fight the Chinese with. About 2000 marines will, however, be placed under Straubenzee's orders when we land at Canton, about the same number of blue-jackets will be landed to help, and a French naval force of unknown strength, probably 1000. After taking the place, our difficulties will begin ; for we shall then have to hold it with a force reduced to the marines and the military, about 2500, which will, of course, be gradually diminishing from various casualties, and with which we shall have to keep military occupation of a city whose walls are 8 miles round. I am in hopes, however, that before very long we may get two entire Indian regiments, and without this reinforcement at the least I do not think we shall be able to occupy Canton long. I hope Lord Canning will do all in his power to help us ; he ought, for everything here has been sacrificed for India, and now that he has turned the corner he should make a sacrifice for us. England may possibly be compromised without his help, for we must go on here with what has been so long ago begun. . . . You must not allow India to absorb the whole of your interest, you must reserve a small portion of your thoughts for China ; for I assure you we mean to make a brilliant little affair of this. Another of our difficulties will be taking care of this place in our absence ; I have no doubt there will be some incendiaries, I hope nothing more disagreeable. We can't leave more than 200 men behind, and the population of Victoria and the suburbs

must be at least 70,000. The Mandarins on the mainland have great influence over our population, and are constantly sending emissaries amongst them. . . . All this, however, is most interesting to me, and gives Clifford and me plenty of work, for all the military are almost entirely in our hands now.

HEADQUARTERS, HONG KONG, *November* 14.— . . . Operations . . . are now postponed, I understand, another month, in consequence of the French being desirous of receiving reinforcements, which I am not sorry for, as we shall ourselves have a greater chance of being reinforced from India, which I am now in strong hopes Lord Canning will be able to carry into effect. He must not forget us. Lord Elgin has received by this mail letters from home, approving highly of the step he took in going to Calcutta, which has pleased him immensely, and I believe he himself is sanguine as to getting some troops, and I have reason to think they will be very necessary, . . . but all accounts we get through Chinese spies must be received with great distrust; none of these people can be depended upon, even when their best interests are at stake. For all that, I anticipate a good deal of fighting; the approaches to Canton, at least to the part we intend to make for, namely the north, are very difficult; the east side being very hilly and rugged, and the low ground intersected by numerous canals for irrigation, the west side being similar, and moreover the side from which they expect us, and have been making apparently the greatest preparations. The south side is town all the way up to our intended point, and is crossed by two walls parallel with the river; all this would be immaterial with a good force, because then we could take our time and gain ground bit by bit, but with a small force and the difficulty of keeping up proper communication with the fleet we cannot afford to go leisurely to work; we must strike a rapid and decisive blow, trusting to

the moral effect of our dash at the place. Holding the town after it is taken will be the real commencement of our work, and if we do this with a divided command the difficulty will be serious. Lord Elgin is, I think, fully alive to this, and will, I hope, induce the Admiral to give over the marines to us the moment they land at Canton, and if in addition to them we get 1500 men from India we shall do the thing comfortably. I have not yet taken over my department, for the General still lingers on; . . . between you and me, he is sadly disgusted at being ordered to India, and is doing all he can to stay on; . . . I should not be surprised if he remained, though I should think he would get into a frightful scrape if he did. We are now at the commencement of our winter—that is to say, that although we sit all day with every door and window wide open, yet at dinner we are obliged to shut half of them, and at night, instead of lying outside the bed-clothes, we are obliged to throw one sheet over us. The thermometer in my room where I am now writing to you at half-past 4 p.m., with nearly every door and window open, is 64°, so I leave you to judge how delightful the climate is just now. I constantly meet Bruce and the attachés, the former of whom often asks after you. . . .—Your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Nieces, Fanny and Florence Wilson[22]

HONG KONG, *November* 14.

MY DEAR GIRLS,— . . . I have had no letters for the last two months, and begin to feel that I am in the proud position of an injured being. I suppose they all think I am still floating on a barrel in the Indian Ocean, and that as the degree of latitude I am in is uncertain it is not worth while writing. You may suggest this casually when you are next at Hampton Court; at present the date of my last letter from England is July. You have no idea what a nice

establishment we have here; our house is really a beautiful one, and our attendants, for five people, consist of three Englishmen who enact the parts of valets: Cameron is one, and is very well and very good. Then we have a Hindu man cook, and a Chinese boy as kitchenmaid, one Hottentot, two more Indian servants, three Chinese men doing housemaid's work, whom we call Mary Ann, Jane and Susan, two watchmen and two messengers, so you see we live in ducal style. Then we have each of us two coolies who do not live in the house, and who carry us about in our chairs when it is too hot to walk, for there is not such a thing as a carriage in the whole island, except one or two private ones. . . . The Chinese are an endless source of amusement. I am constantly watching all their funny ways when I am out walking. You never saw such a hard-working set of people; they do more work in a day than any European I ever saw; their industry is wonderful. You never see them by any chance dawdling about, they are always busy. . . . Give my love to Minchen when you write, and tell her the Chinese have not got little, curly, stumpy scuts like the faun we saw at the Crystal Palace, but fine, long, honest tails. . . .

This is rather a shabby letter, my dearest girls, and if it does not contain much matter, it must at all events be received as a proof that I am always thinking of you, which I assure you I am. Don't neglect your architecture, my dear Fan, and let me see you a proficient when I return. Now God bless you, my dears.—Your ever affectionate

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

HONG KONG, *December* 15, 1857.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . Lord Canning [23] has written to say that he cannot spare us any troops, so that there is no use in our waiting any longer. We shall,

therefore, join the Admiral at the end of this week and go at Canton the beginning of next. Think of me on Christmas Day, for that is where I shall be eating my Christmas dinner. (I forgot you would not get this till a month afterwards.) Lord Elgin's ultimatum, which you will probably see in the paper about the time this reaches you, was given in last Friday. I am told it is beautifully written and very moderate. The *Arrow* was not alluded to—or barely so—with which Baron Gros [24] was much pleased. It sets forth the grievances of which, for a long series of years, we have to complain, and for which, in common with every other nation, we are now assembled to seek redress. Ten days are allowed for an answer, and then we commence hostilities, occupying in the meantime—a rather questionable act, I think—the island of Huan, which Yeh is informed is not intended as an aggressive or coercive act; nevertheless, we shall from there commence our operations. Our force on land, as I told you in my last, will be about 5000 (including marines, sailors, and French), and about 23 guns. A great many of the better class of Cantonese have left their town, and there are various rumours and opinions as to the amount of resistance we shall meet with, but the general impression is that it will be a vigorous one. If it is, the town will suffer fearfully, owing to the batteries we shall have in position, and the numerous gunboats, etc., of the fleets. I think you must give us a little prize money if we do our business well. By the way, talking of that reminds me that Moncrieff [25] wrote to me the other day to say that I had been awarded the Medjidieh; if this is true, pray send me out some of the riband to wear on my coats. . . . I hope you get the letters I send you, they are all directed to the Treasury, and are not prepaid, the last one was sent a month ago. I shall direct this to Bolton Row by way of variety. . . .—Your affectionate brother, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

HONG KONG, *December* 15, 1857.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—The Ultimatum was sent in to Yeh last Friday, 11th of November. Wade,[26] chief interpreter, who took it, was met half-way across the river opposite Canton by the Chinese, who were very courteous, and very soon returned an answer which I am told was very short, but its purpose is as yet a secret. Mr. Wade reports that there is no appearance of preparation on the part of the Chinese, and that boats were moving about much the same as usual, though not quite so numerous. The navy occupy the island of Huan, directly opposite Canton, to-day. We, the troops, move up there on Thursday or Friday, and on Tuesday following, which will be about ten days after the delivery of the Ultimatum, the time allowed to Yeh to make up his mind, proceed to hostilities in the event of an unfavourable answer being returned by the Chinese. The General — Straubenzee — accompanied by Major Clifford, A.Q.M.G., and Captain Mann, senior engineer, are gone up to Huan to see the ground we are to encamp on, previous to commencing our attack on Canton, as well as to make such reconnaissance as they may be able to do, and then finally settle upon the plan of operations with the English and French admirals. Our available land force will be about 5000, including the English sailors, and about 900 French, besides 25 field pieces. The English and French gunboats will co-operate, together with such other vessels of small draught as we can get opposite Canton. They will bring a tremendous fire to bear upon the place, and altogether I think we shall make a rapid and successful business of it. What the next step will be is more than I can tell you; we shall have to hold the city, but for how long is very uncertain. It is a capital time of year for these operations. We expect dry, coldish weather, and at this season the rice fields, which at other times are swampy and unhealthy, are dry, the crops being just gathered

in. I paid a visit to the Admiral the other day, who was at anchor just below Tiger Island in what is called the Bocca Tigris, and immediately above the Bogue forts. The lower part of the Canton River is very uninteresting, being very broad and shallow and without any view of interest till you come to these forts. The passage of the river at this point narrows to three-quarters of a mile, and in the hands of any other people could be made so strong that it would be impossible to force it. The Chinese command this passage with five large forts which could bring a fire of 300 guns to bear upon any one spot. These forts are mostly dismantled, but the guns, some of which are of an enormous size (some of them larger than any we have got in our Service), still remain, though we have rendered them unserviceable. The works are strongly and solidly constructed of granite ; they have adopted one or two minor principles of fortification, but, excepting this, there is an absence of all science in their construction. They have brought together the rough materials of war, of which they have an abundance, and which have been used with a degree of labour quite remarkable, considering the unsatisfactory results they arrive at. But when they apply science to these raw materials they will become a formidable people, at all events considerably more so than they ever have been yet, and this science cannot be much longer withheld from them. This may be a comparatively easy business we have got on hand, but twenty years [*hence*] it would be a very different affair. . . . I don't think I have missed a mail writing to somebody. You like to know about my health. . . . I am perfectly well and to a degree that surprises me. I always thought this climate would disagree with me, whereas I really have never been better in my life. . . .

Huan, directly opposite Canton, *December* 27, 1857.—Just one line to say I am all well. I land in an hour to help in making preparations for the remainder of the force, which will all disembark to the east

of Canton, two miles off, to-morrow morning. The fleet bombard the town at daybreak to-morrow (I wish Yeh joy !), and the following morning we go in and capture the city. I have really and truly been so occupied day and night lately that I have not been able to write more. I should not have written now if I did not think you might be worrying yourself—but you need not trouble yourself about me. We expect to take the place with scarcely any loss, and if you could only see what spirits we are all in you would be satisfied. . . .

I am writing this in such haste that I have been dipping my pen first into black and then red ink.

Bombardment commenced { Dec. 28th.
City burning in two places { 7.30 a.m.

CANTON, *December* 29, 1857.—We captured Canton by escalade at nine o'clock this morning, with a trifling loss not worth mentioning. We have had two days' hard work, but the result has been even more successful than any one of us imagined. I am unhurt, but tired very much. We are in occupation of the city and surrounding forts.

CANTON, *January* 13, 1858.—. . . I can now give you a little more detailed account of our proceedings. We left Hong Kong on the 19th, a wretched little force of 400 bayonets, 60 sappers, 250 artillery, and 20 guns, the marines, numbering about 2000, not having been then given over to us. With this force, assisted by the French and English navies, we were to attack a large city supposed to contain, with the river population and suburbs, one million inhabitants. Everyone expected a tough resistance, the walls being 30 feet high, mounted with guns, protected by detached forts, and, moreover, our attack on the city having been known to the Cantonese twelve months previously. With all this we were more than sufficient for the work, which proved

to be mere child's play. After anchoring off Danco's Island for two or three days, the General and staff went to Huan, immediately opposite Canton, where the river is about 300 yards broad, the troops still remaining on board ship. On the 29th the General and staff went down the river beyond Kuper's Island to superintend the landing of the troops at daybreak next morning. . . . It was a lovely moonlight night, and after dinner the staff all went on shore to see how the engineers were getting on with the landing-place, and if the outposts landed for their protection were properly placed. The next morning we were all anxiously listening for the first gun to fire from the fleets, who it was agreed should bombard the town for twenty-four hours. It was a moment of much excitement and interest and also of compassion, waiting for the signal of this frightful punishment on the wretched city, the Cantonese being quite ignorant of what was going to happen to them. Shells and rockets were shortly flying in all directions, and very soon the town caught fire. It was now time to commence landing the troops, which was done without any opposition whatever. On advancing inland, however, about half a mile in the direction of Fort Lin or East Fort, the enemy tried to annoy us by throwing rockets amongst us, firing jingalls,[27] etc. The men who fired were hardly ever visible, they always kept well concealed among the numerous graves which literally cover the whole environs. They are of a peculiar construction, and afford admirable cover to sharp-shooters, the only thing denoting their presence being the rockets and numerous flags, chiefly white, which they kept waving in defiance from behind every little bit of rising ground, which enabled them to do so with impunity. Here our first little conflict began. The French advanced upon these fellows in one direction, while I was sent to direct the 59th in attacking them in another. They were, of course, very soon driven back, and the 59th occupied one of the ridges vacated by the Chinese. It was while occupying this ridge that a poor fellow

named Hackett, of the 59th, whom I knew very well, A.D.C. to Colonel Graham, commanding the 2nd Brigade, was murdered. He was sent back to the landing-place by the Brigadier, and in passing some huts some country people stealthily knocked him down as he was passing their doors, and instantaneously cut his head off. (The Cantonese Government had put a price upon each of our heads.) These wretched brutes did not, however, see that there were two or three of our soldiers not far off who witnessed the whole business, ran up and shot two of them, and made the third prisoner—we hung him on a tree in the afternoon. We now proceeded to the attack of Fort Lin or East Fort, which, after firing round shot and grape at us for some time, while we were waiting for the scaling ladders to come up, was suddenly evacuated by the Braves, and French and English rushed in. We were now under fire of the walls of the town, which opened in a desultory way upon us, and the remainder of the day was spent in arranging our troops for the night and in watching the enemy coming to attack us, which amused us all very much. They advanced like a mob, firing rockets and jingalls, and waving flags and shouting, and when near enough we threw a few shells among them, and away they ran in all directions. Then they would assemble and come on again, very brave at a distance; but when they got near enough to satisfy their honour they would suddenly halt and look about them, quite scared, till another shell or two woke them up. Some of the fellows were armed with swords and shields, and bows and arrows have been picked up. After placing our outposts, we lay down for the night, and before daybreak were on the alert, waiting for daylight to give the assault. Skirmishers were thrown out close to the walls to keep down the fire, while artillery advanced over the rice-fields to break the parapet walls. The shipping in the river kept up its firing day and night till 9 a.m. on this day, and when it ceased we planted our ladders and escaladed, the enemy running away as they did from Fort Lin.

The Braves, however, made some very plucky stands at three different places, but were all shot or bayoneted, though in this case they opposed our men hand to hand, and showed a good deal of personal courage. But there was no organisation amongst them, each man acted independently; otherwise the raw material was good, but they will never learn to make use of it. We established our Headquarters on the high ground within the city walls on the north and the east of the five-storeyed pagodas, where I am now living in the house marked H.Q., and the troops bivouacked along the ramparts. And so the Maiden City was captured. We were fired on from that portion we had not occupied that day and the following night, but the day after the Governor and Tartar General sent an officer of very subordinate rank to treat with us. The Admirals and General listened to what he had to say, and when they discovered his low rank and that therefore nothing could be arranged with such a fellow, they packed him off, telling him that if the Tartar General were really anxious to treat, they would meet him at the North Gate in an hour's time. This was an instance of Chinese policy; they probably wanted to see if we would treat with this man: if we had, it would have been lowering ourselves in the Chinese eyes, and they would have had us at an advantage. However, the hour arrived, and no Tartar General was there, so we collected a small force and proceeded to the West Gate and round all the walls of the town, destroying all the guns we came across, so that this completed our conquest of the city walls. Still, we had not been inside the city. Yeh, the Tartar General, and the Governor of the Province were still there, and until we could bring them to make overtures nothing had really been effected. On the morning, therefore, of the 5th January, soon after daylight, five columns with guns moved into the city at different points, so as to arrive simultaneously at the West Gate, the Treasury, a house where Yeh was supposed to be, the Governor's yamen (residence), and the Tartar General's yamen. The

expedition succeeded beyond everybody's expectation. Yeh, the Governor, and the General were all captured, and brought under escort through the city to Head-quarters, where they were lodged in safety as prisoners of war. Yeh was soon down on board the *Inflexible* that evening to be the better secured, the Governor and General remaining up here, as it was our object to induce them to continue governing the city under our protection and to issue proclamations to the people to that effect, and telling them that we were masters of the town. This they refused to do at first, so we gave them twenty-four hours to consider over it, intending in case they refused to send them on board ship too. But the next day they thought better of it and gave in to all our demands, so on the 9th we marched them back to the Governor's yamen, where Lord Elgin, Baron Gros, and suite, accompanied by the Admirals, General, and a large staff of officers, had previously gone to receive them. On arrival Lord Elgin made them a very good speech, congratulating them on being restored to their homes, and that now they were going to be associated in the government of the city with three Commissioners chosen from the Allies for that purpose ; that if any treachery were shown or further opposition offered it would be met with the severest repression, and adding as soon as the Emperor could grant our terms we should leave the city. Baron Gros then made a speech, and the Governor replied. When the meeting broke up, the three Commissioners remained with a guard in the Governor's house to carry on the government of the city, which seems to promise well. Everything is going on well ; the people are most submissive, and we have nothing more to fear except from treachery or surprises, but I do not think with all their cunning that they will catch us asleep. We are fortifying ourselves in a position which will soon be strong enough to resist the whole Chinese Empire. I send you a portrait [28] of that coarse, bloated savage Yeh,—you never saw such a beast, he is like a prize ox, but they say he is very clever ; he may

be so, but a more disgusting-looking fellow I never saw. The profile is admirable, it is a perfect likeness ; the front face is not so good, he does not squint quite so much. They are done by Major Crealock [29] in the Q.M.G.'s department. . .

CANTON, *February* 26, 1858.—The mail has just come in, bringing me letters up to the 6th December. I cannot tell you how much pleasure it has given me, for it has brought me a budget of letters such as I have not received since my arrival in China ; and I have more to expect, for Captain Lambert of the Engineers, who landed here this evening, tells me that he has a packet of books for me in his portmanteau which I shall get to-morrow. This is the first really satisfactory mail I have had, and I assure you my disappointments have been numerous. I have only missed one mail writing myself to one or other of the family since landing in Hong Kong in August, my scribbling powers will not admit of more, but I am now most amply repaid for my patience. Your different letters to Calcutta have, I think, all reached me, and I have so many to answer that I hope for the present this may be considered a general reply.—There is now no chance of the army going north, or indeed of the force here being employed otherwise than as the garrison of Canton, and as I am now first to be mounted in my regiment, I have written to Moncrieff to beg he will get me ordered to rejoin my regiment, so I am in hopes that the beginning of the autumn will see us together again. I wish you would let William see this, and ask Moncrieff to do his best towards furthering my wishes ; he knows him quite well enough to press upon him the request. I have already written to him about it—to have me ordered home upon the plea of my being first to be mounted. . . . I have been so hard worked for the last three months, and have had so much to annoy me in one way or another, that I really have neither time nor spirits for writing amusing letters. You will perceive by this last sentence that I am rather bilious,

but I hope the next mail will bring you a letter more worth reading than this, and that I shall be in a better humour for writing than I am now. . . .

CANTON, *March* 15, 1858.—My last letter—Feb. 26th—has, I suppose, reached you. I almost wish it had not, for I was so out of sorts when I wrote it that I am afraid it did not give you the pleasure which I should like my letters always to do. . . . I must now give you an account of a picnic party which some of us made the other day into the country, and which has been attended by results more important than we ever anticipated from our quiet little day's amusement. We left the city about a fortnight ago, about nine of us, accompanied by our servants armed, to visit a range of hills called the White Cloud Mountains, which had long attracted our curiosity. The country we passed through was curious enough ; it was divided between burial-grounds and cultivated fields, and very little ground is left unemployed in one or other of these ways ; hilly ground being used for the former, the plains for the latter. The cultivation is beautifully carried on, and an amount of science, neatness, and care is shown which astonishes you. The paddy (rice) fields were not then under water, the first crop not being then planted, but when it is, the country will be one mass of water, for the rice when once in the ground is subject to an unceasing system of irrigation till harvest-time. There are no roads in China, the only system of communication, except by water, being long narrow bridle-paths which hardly admit of two people walking abreast. They are generally paved with slabs of granite to prevent them from wearing away. There are no hedges or ditches separating the fields, but merely low ridges, so that when you look upon a plain from any height you see one continuous mass of cultivation of the most perfect kind unbroken by tree or road. Along these narrow paths we had to walk in single file the whole way. At last we came within sight of a village, and no sooner had the people seen us than

they made a regular commotion, running in towards the village, beating gongs and tom-toms, and evidently in a great state of alarm. We had previously determined to avoid all villages for fear of creating any such alarm, or to run any risk of coming into collision with the people. This last point was most essential, as any disturbance between us and the villages might have complicated the diplomatic arrangements which were going on, so that the utmost forbearance and discretion were requisite on our part. We therefore did not go any nearer, but leaving the village half a mile on our right continued our road. As we passed, the headman of the village came out to meet us and make friends with us, inviting us to the village to drink tea ; but we could not alter our plans, and so left him. We next halted for breakfast near one or two other villages, when the people poured out to look at us in wonder and amazement. At first they were rather shy and kept at a distance, but one or two bolder than the rest came nearer, and then all the rest followed their example, crowding round us and eyeing us with the greatest curiosity. They examined our clothes, and thought a good deal of the beauty of the cloth ; but one or two officers who were sketching attracted the greatest attention. It was very amusing to witness them. They were well clothed, and seemed to be all pretty comfortably off. We continued our journey, circling round the mountains, till we entered a large plain. We then made for a large wood we saw on the opposite side of the plain, where we proposed to have tiffin and expected to find some game. On approaching this wood we unexpectedly found ourselves in presence of a large village hitherto hid from view ; we were too near to avoid it, as we should have wished, and therefore went on, lest the villagers should think we avoided them from fear. So on we went, the people civil as usual. On nearing our wood, which was now close at hand, the people followed us, making signs to us not to enter the wood. At that moment we heard a confused noise inside as of people in a state of alarm,

and distinguished some 30 or 40 soldiers armed with jingalls, swords, spears, and shields ; as we entered the wood they ran away as hard as they could go, while we followed them and called to them through our interpreter not to be frightened, but come back, as we did not wish to hurt them ; but they continued to run, making for another wood, where they spread the alarm, and we soon heard their gongs beating in all directions. We now saw that we were in a regular wasps' nest, and had come upon a quantity of so-called Braves who infest the 96 villages which you must often have heard of, and of which this is one. We now saw the probability of a collision taking place, and had we brought home one wounded man it would have been very awkward for us. Our great object now was to avoid this, so, after following them up to the other end of the wood, just to let them see that we were all ready for them, we decided upon getting back to the plain again, and to avoid four or five villages which lay between us and Canton. We had scarcely turned when a jingall was fired at us from another direction, but we continued our road without noticing it and got into the plain. We soon saw some men running after us waving flags ; evidently these were soldiers who had picked up a little courage and intended annoying us on our way home. They soon got near enough to fire upon us with their jingalls, which we were now obliged to return, and soon sent them running away ; but they returned and kept firing at us from a distance. We could not get at them, for directly we made a show of fighting they ran away and then returned as we proceeded on our way. Our great anxiety was to avoid getting any of the men wounded, and an accidental shot might have done that at any moment ; however, by good luck, and thanks to their excessive bad firing, we managed, after bowling over two of their men, to get back without having a man touched ; and it was lucky we did, for our little trip brought some small censure upon us for going away so far as we did into the country, but, as we had luckily brought all our party back safe and

sound, there was no great harm done. An expedition is going out in a day or two to punish these fellows for their impudence, but I am afraid we shall see nothing of them, they will all have disappeared. So much for my first picnic in China. Lord Elgin has started for the north, . . . he had previously sent on one of his attachés, accompanied by another from the French. They were to go to Shanghai, and then to communicate with the mandarins with a view to their forwarding for them a letter from Lord Elgin to the Emperor ; but it appears that the Governor of the province had gone away inland so as to be out of the way, and they cannot get at him to have the letter forwarded. These are the kind of stupid tricks they will play to try and prevent our communicating with the Emperor. However, it is no longer an affair between France and England and China, for the Russian and American plenipotentiaries are both gone up as well, and have declared with us, so that with such a pressure upon him I do not think the Emperor can hold out long, therefore I am still of opinion that the beginning of the autumn will see us together again, and most glad I shall be, for I have no wish to remain cooped up here any longer than I can help. . . . I am hard at work every day from nine till five, without a single moment's interruption, and as this is all office work I do not feel much disposed for more writing when I get back to my room. I am sure my sisters will all feel this and not be angry at my sending this circular. . . . I assure you it only makes me think *the more of them.* When you see Susie [30] thank her for her dear letter. . . . I must appeal to your good nature—all—not to leave off writing because I don't answer all letters. . . .—Your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Sister-in-Law, Mrs. Stephenson

CANTON, *March* 28, 1858.

MY DEAR JULIA,—I have been very tardy in acknowledging the receipt of your package of books,

sponges, etc., and, what I prized more than all, your own letter. I trust the sight of my handwriting may give you half the pleasure which yours did to me. . . . Lord Elgin has left for the north, . . . whether he will ultimately go to Pekin is more than I can say, but one thing is certain, if he goes there he must go peaceably, for we have no land force to send with him. Oliphant[31] (a friend of Augustus's[32]) went up to Shanghai in advance, accompanied by a French attaché bearing Lord Elgin's letter to the Emperor. They report most favourably of their reception, the mandarins expressing the greatest impatience for the arrival of the ambassadors. I have every reason to think that matters will be very shortly settled with the Chinese, and there is no doubt whatever that Lord Elgin has completely made up his mind to bring affairs to a speedy peaceable issue. He has started from here with all his future plans cut and dried, which are that a treaty will be settled by June, when he goes to Japan, and expects to get to Suez in September. India is, I believe, to be his ultimate destination. . . . The Hong Kong merchants are beginning to feel dissatisfied with Lord Elgin for coming out all this way to do nothing, as they say. They are very diffident about the present state of things, and not one of them has made even an attempt at re-establishing himself at Canton. One reason for this, however, is that the Factory Ground is to be re-allotted to the different European nations by the two plenipotentiaries, which has not yet been done. People must not imagine that the question of free intercourse with China or even Canton will be finally settled by the forthcoming treaty ; Chinese insolence, exclusiveness, and ignorance are not to be set aside so easily. It must take years and years to destroy the prejudices which have been formed and encouraged for so many centuries, therefore a few years hence there will most assuredly be a repetition of the present Chinese expedition. It seems almost a pity not to clinch matters more decidedly than we are likely to do, but I do not think it can be

helped ; there is no use in asking more from the Chinese than we can enforce, and we are not in a position to enforce much more than we have got. India has absorbed all our forces, and will continue to do so for some time to come, and without more troops an expedition to Pekin is quite out of the question. . . . The city of Canton is about the most dirty, stinking city in the world, and with scarcely anything in it of the smallest interest. No lady could walk in it ; in fact, I have only heard of one having ever done so, and she was the wife of the French Consul at Macao, *née* Miss McLeod, I believe an American. . . . She walked through the city in man's clothes and rode about like a man. She was staying with the French Admiral for a few days, and never appeared in any other dress. She had her hair dressed as like a man's as possible, and with her dandy-like frock-coat reminded me of the women on the stage acting the parts of young men. I sat next her at dinner one day, and we got such good friends that I was within an ace of patting her on the back when we parted. . . .—Yours affectionately,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

CANTON, *April* 12.

MY DEAR MOTHER,— . . . You will know my answer to your doubts by this time as to whether I intend to leave the Guards or not—it is the very last thing I think of doing, and therefore you will in all probability see me home, as I told you, early in the autumn. Cameron is very well and is an admirable servant. You have no idea what a comfort it is to have such a good fellow about one. . . .—Ever your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . Your information of my promotion was very welcome, and would have been

still more so if it had been accompanied with my recall in consequence of it ; however, I hope by the time this reaches you that it will be well on its way out, for . . . I wrote so strongly to Moncrieff, begging him to get me recalled to my regiment, that I cannot conceive it possible that I should be here after the middle, or at latest the end of June. . . . Moncrieff did a very good-natured act for me in asking the Duke to allow me to remain on here at my present post, not knowing that Canton was taken . . . as this was asked as a favour there will, I hope, be no difficulty in getting this favour set aside. . . . Since writing the above we have received news from Shanghai, where all the plenipotentiaries are, which does not appear to be quite so satisfactory as people expected. The Emperor had sent a reply to Mr. Reid, the American Plenipotentiary, in which he referred him back to Canton, where he said he had sent his Commissioner to treat. Lord Elgin had not, I believe, received his reply, but it was daily expected, and would no doubt be the same. If the Emperor persists in his obstinate folly, a large force will be required to coerce him, and where is it to come from ? It is quite certain we cannot look either to India or England for succour ; but the general impression seems to be that the moment Lord Elgin shows determination the Emperor will give in. We have had nothing yet to complain of in the way of weather, and the heat has not commenced ; thermometer now is 74° to 76°. I am very fortunate in the room I live in, for I do not think the sun will ever shine upon it. That is not a recommendation that would please you in England, but here it is a very important one. . . . —Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STHEPENSON.

To his Niece, Susan Hamilton Stephenson

CANTON, *April 7.*

Many thanks, my dear Susie, for your two very agreeable letters, which contained a great deal of news

that interested and amused me. What an agreeable visit you seem to have had from our German friends last autumn! I hear there is a chance of your repaying the visit. Is that so? I am sure you will enjoy it if you do, and turn it, I have no doubt, to good account in every way. I cannot give you so good an account of our theatricals at Canton as you have given me of yours, but still I witnessed a brilliant performance by some private soldiers the other night which amused me very much, and was very creditably performed. The play was *Douglas*, a first-rate tragedy—"My name is Norval," etc.—performed in a Chinese temple upon a large altar from which a joss had been recently deposed—a joss, my dear, is a god—after which the altar was further desecrated by the laughable farce of *Two in the Morning*. Tell Helen, with my love, that I am looking out for a tail for her. I have had occasion to cut off a great many by way of punishment, but they were all so dirty looking that I did not think any of them nice enough to send home. There are some loves every now and then, so clean and well plaited and reaching quite down to the heels that I am often sorely tempted to redeem my promise by cutting one of these off. The Tartars have the finest in general, but Yeh had a wretched specimen, hardly enough to keep the flies off. But the most comical sights are the little children. You often see little fat urchins that can just walk decorated with a tail which, being artificial, generally sticks bolt upright. And now, my dear, so much for my Essay on Tails. The next remarkable feature in this populous city, and one which strikes the nose of every observer with wonder and admiration, is the pleasing variety of smells which greet you at every corner. It does not do to try and walk fast in this city, for as your breath has been previously taken away by this very striking feature in the atmosphere, you might find yourself in difficulties. If I do not previously succumb from its effects I will dilate more fully upon this when we meet. . . . I had some bird's nest soup for dinner yesterday. We saw

them preparing the stuff in the town—it looks something like isinglass—and bought enough for dinner. It was poor, insipid stuff, very gelatinous and with a sickly taste of very weak sugar and water. . . . Give my kindest love to your mother and sisters, not forgetting Grant.[33] . . . —Yours affectionately, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

CANTON, *May* 4, 1858.

MY DEAR MOTHER,— . . . We are rather looking forward with interest to the mail from Shanghai as being likely to indicate a little of the future and whether we are to stay at Canton for ever, or that Lord Elgin will succeed in his determination to make peace. Rumours are afloat in all directions that the Chinese are raising men and money in order to attack us; they will never do it, they cannot—they dare not. I am certain these rumours . . . are merely got up to keep us in a state of alarm, but of course we must act as if they were likely to be true. . . . The rumours in question, and which I believe to have been industriously circulated by the Mandarins, have alarmed the Cantonese immensely, and they have left the town in such numbers that it has become a perfect desert. All the Mandarins and officials have sneaked out one by one till at last only three remained—Pih-Kevei (the Governor), the Judge, and the Collector of Customs. As it would have been difficult to carry on the government of the city in the absence of all Chinese officials these three were made prisoners at the moment when all their things were packed up and they were on the point of starting. They were very indignant at this treatment, and threatened to baffle all our designs by destroying themselves. But when told in reply that as far as we were concerned they were perfectly welcome to do so, but that at the same time it would be a pity to deprive the Emperor, their master, of their valuable services, they then answered that under those circumstances

they would relinquish their designs of suicide. . . . I do not think there is any chance of the Headquarter Staff going to the north, so that I do not care how soon I am ordered home. . . . Pray thank all who have written to me for their letters, worth their weight in gold. . . .—Your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

CANTON, *May* 19, 1858.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . The last accounts we received were that the plenipotentiaries had given the Emperor six days, and that if at the end of that time he did not send down a Mandarin of equal rank with themselves for the purpose of treating they should commence hostilities. These six days would expire on the 1st May [? *June*] and on the 5th the squadrons would be ready to attack the forts at the entrance of the Pei-ho. These forts mounted 70 guns, which fired down a channel about 300 yards broad. The Chinese were very busy strengthening these forts, which they had made rather formidable. Some of the gunboats had already crossed the bar at the mouth of the river, and one or two had grounded on it. The entrance to the river is extremely difficult owing to this bar, upon which at that time there was a great deal of surf, the weather being very rough—the anchorage for the ships was 8 miles off. However, the postscript of the letter bringing this news stated that a Mandarin had just arrived announcing that in two days a Mandarin of the highest rank would arrive at the mouth of the Pei-ho to confer with the plenipotentiaries, and that there was a possibility of a peaceful solution. . . . The general impression, however, is that if a treaty is signed under present circumstances, our future relations with China will be more unsatisfactory than they were before the commencement of this business. . . . A razzia should be made of some of the 96 villages, and Fat-shan should be taken, for it is to these places that

the Mandarins have retired and are now bidding us a sort of impotent defiance. The strictest injunctions have been given to prevent our coming into collision with the people outside the town, so as to offer no impediment whatever to negotiation. The result is, no one is allowed to go more than a mile beyond the city walls, the consequence of which system is that we are accustoming the Chinese to the sight of our power without making them feel it, which, with people like the Chinese, I cannot consider to be very politic. The Mandarins down here have been busy lately in spreading all sorts of rumours about intending to attack us . . . that they have collected a subscription of 100 million dollars, publishing all kinds of impudent proclamations, in which they offer certain sums for our heads should we dare to attack them in the neighbouring villages, likening us, rather practically, to the worm which eats into the leaf and ends by destroying all the foliage of the tree. Poor devils! they have neither soldiers, money, nor pluck enough to do what they would give their ears to see done, namely, that we should be driven out of this place. We have very foolishly been giving too much attention to these idle rumours . . . and in order to take precautions against surprise the principal gates of the city have been closed, whereby traffic has been entirely stopped, the wretched inhabitants reduced to great misery, and the town, which, when we entered it, was so full of people, converted into a complete desert. This was a very foolish step, for it was playing into the hands of the Mandarins, and doing the very thing they wished, namely, to create a panic among the people and drive them out of the town. However, the gates are now open again and business is looking a little lively. . . . —Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Sister, Mrs. Henry Giffard

My dear Ella,— . . . I think if Lord Elgin can once get this fellow [*the high-class Mandarin expected to treat*] by the button he will not let him go till he has brought matters to a satisfactory issue. I assure you I shall not be at all sorry when this treaty really has been signed, for this place is beginning to pall on me. Five months have we now been cooped up in this dirty place, and it is beginning to get very monotonous. I would give a great deal to be suddenly transported to a seat in your garden at this moment, with something more refreshing to the eyesight than this endless array of tails that is constantly before me. This town has been converted into a perfect desert the last fortnight, owing to our having closed the principal gates in consequence of rumours that the Chinese intended to attack us. . . . The wretched Cantonese, in a horrid state of alarm, have nearly all left the city, with their tails standing on end. . . .—Ever your affectionate brother,

Fredk. Stephenson.

To Lady Stephenson

My dear Mother,—It appears that I am to stay out here a little longer, as it will not do for me to throw up my appointment, so that I must wait now until the Chinese affair is over. However, as far as I am concerned, matters are being conducted in such a much more satisfactory manner that I have no longer the same strong reasons for wishing to return that I had, especially as my health is better, if possible, than it has been all my life. I have not had one day's illness nor the slightest symptom of anything approaching to ailment. It is really quite wonderful how the climate agrees with me, I, who used to think I could not stand a tropical summer for one month. Now that I have said so much about myself I will give you an account of a little expedition we made against the Braves last

week, which, although it did not result in anything very wonderful, did us all good.

Last Wednesday, at 4 a.m., we left the city for the White Cloud Mountains, taking 100 men with us, the French 20. Our object was half business, half pleasure; we wanted to see what was going on in our neighbourhood, if any Braves were assembling, and made that an excuse for a picnic. After a march of an hour and a half up the mountain-side we reached a Buddhist temple at the top, where we took up our quarters and had breakfast. We then sauntered out to the highest neighbouring peak, where we had a most magnificent view for many miles around, the 96 villages lying dotted about amidst the paddy fields at our feet. Presently we spied at the foot of a mountain an entrenched camp, containing about 50 or 60 tents, and probably 1000 men, at a distance of about 3 miles as the crow flies. It was at once resolved to attack this camp, and for this reason we had to send back for some more troops. These, to the amount of about 500, arrived late at night, and at half-past three the next morning we set out for the camp, our chief object being to get all over before the great heat of the day came on. This was on the 2nd of June. We got down into the plain a little before sunrise, and then the Braves made their appearance, covering some hills about a mile off, waving their flags in defiance, and firing their jingalls. They retired as we advanced, and we soon came again upon their main body, occupying a range of hills in front of their camp, which, however, was hid from our view. After we had driven them back a small party advanced to reconnoitre the Chinese position; we were received very well, and a well-sustained fire kept up upon us. Reinforcements were now sent for to enable us to go in at the camp at once, but when they arrived, the General, to the disgust of everybody, and in spite of all the remonstrances that were made, would not advance, but ordered the troops to retire upon their own position, intending to attack the camp at

5 p.m., when the heat of the day was over. But when five o'clock arrived the camp had disappeared, and not a Chinaman was to be seen anywhere; so, after burning the village, which formed part of the camp, we again retired upon our former position, bivouacked there during the night, and returned the next morning to Canton without seeing a single Chinaman. They had all disappeared, and I must candidly confess that they had the best of it, for they baffled us by retiring in the way they did, and it was a fatal mistake not to destroy their camp in the early part of the day. But the fact is that it is madness attempting anything of this kind during this season—the heat of the sun most effectually prevents it. We lost one sergeant and four men, who dropped down dead from sunstroke, and at one time had thirty-six men *hors de combat* from the same cause. The thermometer in the Canton River on that day ranged in the shade from 93° to 95°. Luckily some of us had umbrellas (which we carried with us under fire), and so saved us from a great deal of heat. One poor gunner was struck down in a frightfully sudden manner. He was dragging at one of the guns when a comrade asked him if he was all right; he replied—never better in his life—gave one more haul at the rope, and dropped down dead. A quarter of an hour after uttering this last sentence he was actually buried, for the column could not bring his body on with them, and were obliged to bury him on the spot. We also lost a surgeon in precisely the same way as poor Lieutenant Hackett. He was straggling a little by himself, and his pony, stumbling in a paddy field, threw him; instantly half a dozen men, concealed, rushed upon him and cut his head off. In other respects we suffered nothing, having only six men slightly wounded, and none killed. The heat in Canton is becoming great, and it has cost us, for the last ten days, as many men; in other respects the men are excessively healthy. . . . Could you not manage to send my orders to me, Medjidieh, and all together, with some spare riband

to put on all my coats? I should think they could come in the War Office bag. I dare say the girls would buy for me a set of miniature medals, and send them out also. William will give them the money; they are about the size of a threepenny piece, and can be got at Hunt & Roskells.—Ever, my dear mother, your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

CANTON, *June* 6, 1858.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—Many thanks for your letter of the 24th of April and for all the trouble you have taken on my account relative to my wish to rejoin my regiment, which, at the time I wrote, I was most anxious to do, and had been for some time. Indeed, I still think I am to blame to some extent for not having taken more decisive measures to that end. It was not the nature of the service I wished to get away from—far from it—but the manner in which it was carried on. However, I have a great dislike to talk about these matters, and will merely add that affairs are being conducted in a more satisfactory manner and that I am quite content to stay on. Since I last wrote, thinking then that the Chinese question was virtually settled, affairs have assumed a very unsatisfactory appearance, and I now see no end to the business. On the 20th May, after the usual futile attempts at negotiation with the Chinese had been made, and the old story of attempting to delay coming to the point had been duly enacted, the Plenipotentiaries decided upon forcing the mouth of the Pei-ho. Two of our dispatch-boats and six gunboats, together with four French gunboats, attacked the forts on both banks which mounted about 60 guns, which they silenced after about an hour's fighting. About 1400 men were then landed in the boats of the fleet and took possession of them, advanced afterwards to the capture of an entrenched camp and two more batteries situated higher up the river, the whole of which fell into our

hands, including 150 guns, mostly brass. Our loss was 5 killed and 16 wounded; the French lost upwards of 60 killed and wounded, of which more than 40 were from an accidental explosion of their own making. The Tartars stood well to their guns and made a very good fight; they were about 8000 or 10,000, and retreated to another position higher up the river. We were on the point of following them and pushing up to Tien-tsin, when the dispatch from the North left. The Chinese may possibly come to terms, as we continue to threaten them nearer Pekin, but if they still persist in refusing to come to terms there is no doubt we shall be in a fix. . . . In that case the Plenipotentiaries cannot stay any longer in the North, and will have to come back with their tails between their legs; and then what prospect have we of being able to renew operations with an adequate force? None that I can see, for we have just been told that the 77th, the only European regiment that has been promised us, is not to come to China at all, but is ordered to go to India; and that only in November next are we to get a European battalion, viz. the 2nd battalion of the Royals. But these are not the only difficulties; the Plenipotentiaries and the Admirals do not at all hit it off together, and very serious misunderstandings exist between them. Lord Elgin and Baron Gros on one side are the best possible friends, and so are the English and French Admirals on the other, but the two departments are almost at open feud. Lord Elgin complains that Sir M. Seymour has been dilatory in assembling his vessels off the Pei-ho, and that we ought to have been at Tien-tsin and the Treaty signed long ago. The Admiral complains that he is never consulted upon any single point, and is called on to undertake operations of which he highly disapproves. Then the Yankees, and especially the Russians, are acting the part of very doubtful Allies, if of Allies at all. The Chinese had offered them, evidently to alienate them from us, almost everything they could wish; but there was one point the Yankees could not get out of them and

that was to have a Resident at Pekin, which they at last discovered that the Russians were secretly opposing with all their power, they having, as you know, a Missionary College already established there. However, all these attempts at negotiation apart from us were cut short by the English and French commencing hostilities. You now see the state of the case up in the North, and I must say that affairs are not promising. The next news from the Pei-ho will, I hope, throw some little light upon the future. The rebels appear to be making great progress; they have taken Ning-po, and are daily expected to be in possession of Foo-chow. I have written my mother a few lines giving an account of an expedition made against the Braves the other day. I wish the weather would permit us to do more in that way, but at this season of the year it is madness to attempt anything of the kind; the heat forbids it, and you can't battle against it. You only run the risk of finding yourself paralysed at some critical moment from the exhaustion of the men, and rendered unable to follow up any advantage you may have gained. . . . I wish . . . you would thank Moncrieff heartily for all the trouble he has taken for me . . . and tell him I am perfectly content to stay out here under the circumstances he has mentioned, though of course it will not break my heart when I do have to return. I am very much in want of a military book . . . "Simmons on Court Martials"; could you manage to have it sent out in the War Office bag as a special favour and being for the benefit of the Service? I should also be glad of a copy of "D'Aguilar on Court Martials." . . . —Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

CANTON, *June* 21, 1858.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I merely send a few lines to tell you I am well and hearty, for fear you should think

otherwise from my not writing. . . . During the last week I have had the duties of the Q.M.G. to do as well as my own (Clifford having gone to Hong Kong), which has not left me a moment to myself. The last news from the North was very satisfactory. . . . The Plenipotentiaries had reached Tien-tsin, a long way up the Pei-ho, and within about 80 miles of Pekin. The Chinese Commissioners had met them there, and I really hope that in a fortnight we may hear that negotiations have commenced.

CANTON, *July* 20, 1858.—This mail brings to England Mr. Bruce, Lord Elgin's brother, with the Treaty signed by the Emperor on the 26th ultimo. The terms I cannot give you, as we have not yet seen them here, but there is no doubt they are very satisfactory. The Imperial Commissioners sent to treat with Lord Elgin at Tien-tsin were in such a fright at our having pushed on so near Pekin that they agreed to everything that we asked. It now remains to be seen how far this Treaty will affect us at Canton, and this we shall not know till Lord Elgin's instructions come down for us. Peace at Pekin by no means implies peace at Canton. The turbulent scoundrels of this Province are giving us all the annoyance they can, thinking thereby to drive us out of the city. The Mandarins have raised the whole country against us, and have in their pay a certain number of people they call "Braves," who are in reality nothing more than the lowest and most brutal of the population—thieves, murderers, and so on. The system they have adopted—for they dare not attack us openly, and disperse at the appearance of the smallest armed force—is to force all the inhabitants to quit the city and have no dealings with us whatever. All the better class have left, the shops are all closed except a few of the poorest kind, and the city is a perfect desert. Several hundreds of these Braves now lie concealed about the town, intimidating the people that remain, and trying, as they publicly proclaim, to cut us off by

assassination. They lie in wait for solitary individuals, and if they succeed in murdering them, cut their heads off, for which the Mandarins pay them a high price. We have lost one man in this way, the French one, and the Indian regiments one sepoy and three camp followers. When these attempts are made we burn a large number of houses round the spot where they took place. The most successful attempt, however, that they have made was against a patrol of fourteen men who while marching along a narrow street, where not a Chinaman was visible, were suddenly fired upon by these ruffians concealed in the houses, and, out of fourteen, nine were struck down, one being killed and eight wounded. Not a soul was seen, the whole party running away immediately out of the backs of the houses. We immediately sent down an armed party and burnt the whole neighbourhood to a distance of three-quarters of a mile; but the real offenders escaped, as they always do. On another occasion a patrol moving along at night are injured by the explosion of a powder bag by some villains lying in wait, and two men are badly burnt. They further amuse themselves at night by firing arrow rockets and jingalls at us from outside the walls. These never do us the slightest harm, and are fired with the double view of trying to burn us out and to harrow the men by keeping them on the alert; but as we never turn the men out of bed for these displays of fireworks, and as they never set anything on fire with them, they will probably in time get tired of the amusement. Whenever any hostile attempt is made against us from the city, it is now invariably followed by retribution, and we are now engaged in destroying two very large portions of the town, one covering a space equal to that of a moderate-sized town, and the other not very much smaller. We are all getting heartily sick of this work, and I sincerely trust we shall soon get away. Hwang, our new Viceroy, has not yet received the news of the Treaty being signed; when he has, perhaps there will be an end to this state of things, but it

is doubtful. He has not yet made his appearance in Canton, and one cannot say when he will; his doing so will naturally put an end to all this, and I hope by next mail to be able to give you a hint as to the probable evacuation of Canton, to which I cannot as yet clearly see my way. I am afraid your letters to me are again going astray; three mails have now arrived without my getting a letter from Hampton Court, and two without my hearing from a living soul. Last week I received the *Edinburgh Review* all safe, and the mail before an *Observer* and *Illustrated London News*, all of which were most acceptable. I wanted to have had the latest *Observer* and *Illustrated News* by each mail, but only one *Observer* has reached me since I left England, and an *Illustrated News* I have not had for months with the exception of this one. . . . The climate is frightfully enervating, and it is really a great effort to do any work, particularly in the middle of the day. I long to get another letter from you . . . and trust this mail will be more gracious to me than its predecessors.

CANTON, *August* 8, 1858.— . . . The mail which left England the beginning of June brought me a fortnight ago a letter from you, two from Minny, and one from Fanny. . . . This last mail, however, has brought me nothing, but I see by the *Gazette* that I am made C.B. I know what pleasure this has given you, and would have liked to receive your congratulations from your own lips. The order must now be purchased, and as I know my sisters would like a trip to Hunt & Roskell for the purpose, I wish you would ask William to give them the necessary sum, and when they have got the order, you must keep it for me till my return. I have every reason to think that the beginning of January will see me back in England. I shall not cry unless for joy at getting away. I must leave you to try and find out from William through the Horse Guards in some way or other when we are likely to

return, so that you may leave off writing in time. . . . —Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . My best thanks for the Legion of Honour, which reached me quite safe. You will have known all about the Chinese Treaty long before this, and have probably seen Bruce, who took it home a fortnight ago. Affairs in Canton are far from being in a satisfactory state. . . . Still, I think the worst is over, and that people will very soon return to their shops and recommence trade; for Hwang, the new Viceroy, has announced to the Allied Commanders-in-Chief that the Emperor has informed him that a treaty has been signed; but a more insolent or amusing dispatch than this of Hwang's it is not easy to conceive. He informs us that "the Emperor has graciously accorded us peace, and that as he shall not now most assuredly lead his troops on to attack us, our soldiers may therefore be quite easy in their minds; but that an immense number of Braves have been enrolled, and that if we persist in causing alarm or disturbance in the town he shall not be able to restrain them, and that if we wish for permanent peace we must keep our soldiers under proper control." This piece of impertinence, so thoroughly Chinese, the very type of what might have been written a thousand years ago, has been returned to Hwang with an intimation that he must write in a very different tone if he wishes us to renew peaceful relations. This is a sample of the little difficulties which will impede an immediate restoration to the *status quo*. He will most probably reply in a suitable manner, and then we shall go on smoothly for a little while until another opportunity offers for indulging in a fresh piece of impertinence. Their vanity, obstinacy, and pride are really wonderful, and are only to be equalled by their lying, their cunning,

and their cruelty, and when you think that these amiable qualities are further enhanced by the most arrant cowardice and tempered by no qualities that I can see, except a wonderful industry and great ingenuity, you can form some idea of how odious and contemptible a race the Chinese are. Their attempts to retake the town have been characteristic and often most amusing, though sometimes, when they have had recourse to assassination, rather the reverse. Almost every night since the beginning of June they have tried to annoy us by throwing rockets and firing jingalls at us from the heights which command our position on the north, sometimes they fire for an hour or an hour and a half, sometimes for only a quarter of an hour; they have also been constantly attempting to set fire to our buildings and stores, but have never yet succeeded during the last two months in burning a single thing or wounding (with one trifling exception) a single individual within the lines, although their rockets are to a certain extent formidable weapons, having a nasty barbed arrow at the end. They come with considerable force, and if they could only be directed would have done us some harm. Where they have been more successful is where courage is not required, but only treachery and cruelty. They have murdered and mutilated, in three or four instances, solitary individuals who, contrary to orders, have gone outside the lines, and they have in two instances placed in the way of a patrol bags of gunpowder which have been exploded as the patrol passed, and in each instance severely burnt two men. . . . But even when acts like these are successful these wretched people dare not come out and attack you openly, but run away . . . and leave you to carry off your wounded unmolested. We have often observed from our walls at night numerous lights moving about in the country in all directions, which we have since ascertained to be part

of a system for frightening us and keeping us on the alert. They have turned out to be lanthorns carried on bamboos by country people paid for the purpose, who, by constantly moving about on the different foot-paths, were intended to represent the movements of large bodies of troops advancing to attack the town. On the 20th July their grand attack took place at about half-past 9 p.m. The country was lighted up all round with clusters of lights intended to represent large masses of troops threatening us in every direction. It really looked very pretty. And then the town was suddenly set on fire in seven or eight different places ; the lights were intended to divert our attention and induce us to fire upon them, while the real enemy were much nearer—the fires were intended to draw us into the town to put them out, when, as their proclamation said, they could rush into our deserted lines and easily take them. At the same time a heavy fire of rockets and jingalls was opened upon us from all sides, which lasted without interruption till daybreak ; to this we replied with mortars and howitzers. At daybreak they climbed up on the walls between our lines, and there, on the rampart, they lighted a " stink pot " and began dancing a sort of war dance round it, not calculating that they were within rifle shot. But when the *ballet* was disturbed by a few shots from the lines they disappeared in a moment over the wall, and were never seen again. Another batch of these idiots in large numbers approached one of the gates which flanked the wall, and where a howitzer was in position. These people were more addicted to music than dancing, for they were preceded by a band of music uttering the most discordant sounds and accompanied by the yells and hooting of those that followed. The serenade had a more tragical finale than the *ballet*, for we discharged a shower of grape into the very midst of them —the most perfect silence followed, and so ended the attempt of the Chinese to retake the city of Canton by frightening us out of it. They lost about 200 men,

killed and wounded, and we had not a man who was even grazed. In fact, so truly did we appreciate the importance of the attack, that we did not even turn the troops out, except to man the batteries and support one of the gates. Luckily for us we were under the orders for that night of the second in command, Brigadier Corfield, of the Indian Army, as nice a fellow and as good a soldier as I ever wish to serve under. When I say luckily, I mean that instead of matters being conducted with that fuss, fidget, and alarm which undoubtedly would have been the case, and the men kept under arms all night, the whole affair was treated with the indifference and contempt that it deserved. I have now come upon a topic which I have been desirous to avoid since last December. . . . I am so averse to saying anything about people in authority whom one serves with, that it is only in consequence of a remark in your last letter and another in a preceding one, together with the repeatedly expressed wish of my mother to know the truth of certain rumours which you say are afloat, that for fear you should think I have anything I do not wish to confide in you, I will tell you how affairs have been conducted here since Ashburnham left. It is impossible for duty to have been carried on in a more unpleasant manner, not only to myself, but to every soul with whom —— has had to deal. He understands regimental work well enough, but having said that, I do not know a single other redeeming point in him. He is no more fit to be trusted with command than he is to be Prime Minister. He has no head, no coolness, no decision whatever; his vanity is so great that he is jealous of all about him for fear they should get the smallest amount of praise, and he not get all. He is the most selfish man I ever met, and never, never has been heard to give a single word of encouragement, or to approve of any act on the part of those who are sufficiently high up to make him fear they may come across his path and obtain any credit. For this reason he never listens

to a suggestion,—invariably snubs it,—but later, if a good one, will adopt it as his own. So jealous is he of those about him that he will leave nothing to them. He pretends he does everything himself, and consequently throws everything into confusion, and entails double work upon us by our having to undo many of his acts. In short, he hates, with an intense hatred, every one of the General Staff, the Brigadiers, and Heads of Departments, and as one is in duty bound to bear with all the insults and impertinences which one's superior chooses to put upon you, I leave you to judge whether the last three months have been agreeably passed. I assure you that I have never yet had to do with so mean and contemptible a character, or with any man so utterly devoid of real gentlemanly feeling. I have now given vent to what has been rankling in my mind ever since I have been in Canton, and expressed feelings which I have been trying to suppress for the last three months, and which I should not now, or perhaps ever, have given utterance to except for the reasons I have mentioned above. You may perhaps think my expressions too strong and intemperate, but I have told you no facts ; if I were to tell you of one or two scenes that have taken place, where I and others have been concerned, you would find I had not said half enough. There is not an officer in this command who, if he saw this letter, would not agree to every word of it. I dare say if you saw Bruce he would be able to tell you something as to our friend's capacity. However, I really think that in two or three months we shall be free of this business, and I fully expect to be home in January. . . . I see that I am gazetted C.B., which has given me the greatest pleasure, as I am sure it has to you and all of you. . . .

CANTON, *August* 22, 1858.—Since writing to you by last mail we have made a little expedition against a Chinese town which has rather enlivened us, and broken in upon the dull and monotonous

life we have been living here for so many months. The Chinese, by way of annoying us as much as possible, issued recently some proclamations to the Chinese inhabitants of Hong Kong, warning them that if they did not cease from all intercourse with us, and immediately leave Hong Kong, their relations living on the mainland would be put to death, their property confiscated, and their posterity be for ever debarred from competing at the public examination which is the only means of arriving at power, and which is open to the whole population. The colony of Hong Kong is still so young that it has not yet shaken off all connection with the mother-country,—I mean China,—and most of the population have still their parents and most of their relations living on the mainland. The result of the proclamations was a perfect exodus of the Chinese from Hong Kong, and shops were closed, servants left, and a perfect stagnation of everything took place, provisions were getting scarce, in short, several thousands went away. The village, or rather town, from which these proclamations were issued, having become known, it was determined to destroy it if they persisted in their conduct and would not recall the obnoxious circulars. A gunboat was accordingly sent with a flag of truce to make these representations. The flag was fired upon. It then became necessary to proceed to retribution forthwith. A force of 5 gunboats, and a land force of 700 men, with 3 small guns and 3 rocket tubes, were accordingly dispatched there. The town, or rather suburb, ran along the beach for a distance of about a mile and a quarter, and at its northern extremity was the walled town of Nantow, separated from the rest of the suburb and surrounded by a wall nearly two miles in circumference, precisely similar but on a smaller scale to the one here. The town was about 400 yards from the shore, upon rising ground, and immediately below it was a shore battery of 12 heavy guns, which opened upon us as we advanced to disembark. The fire of the gunboats was, however,

enough to cover our landing without a casualty. We advanced through the suburb, which we were desirous of leaving untouched, and made for the walled town, which we intended to destroy. As we advanced through the suburb we found all the streets occupied by the Braves, who fired upon us as we advanced ; this street firing lasted nearly three hours, which time we required for landing the guns, scaling ladders, etc. We at last arrived at the walls and made arrangements for storming, when the Chinese, seeing our determination to take the place, did pretty much as they did at Canton, that is, left the town and sallied out to take us in flank and rear, where they were received by a force left there for the purpose, and where they suffered very severely. The walls were scaled without opposition of any kind, and the deserted town of Nantow became our prize. Our loss was 2 officers killed, 2 officers severely wounded, 2 men killed, and about 20 wounded. The Chinese loss we calculated roughly at about 500 killed and wounded. One of the officers killed was Captain Lambert, R.E., Augustus's friend, who brought me out a parcel from Bolton Row in the winter ; he was accidentally shot when mounting the wall by a bluejacket who was following him. He was an exceedingly nice fellow, and everybody regrets him. I had rather a shave myself, being struck in the breast by a shot from a jingall when placing the storming parties. The shot must, however, have either come sideways or not have been of a very formidable size, as it only gave me a bruise and tore my clothes. Another shot at the same time went through a roll of papers I had in my hand. That evening the town was given up to pillage, and the next morning at daybreak all hands were turned out and distributed over the town to set it on fire, and it was soon in a blaze in every direction, and continued to burn beautifully till we re-embarked. So much for Nantow. I don't think they will fire on a flag of truce again. . . . The letter from Hwang which I told you had been returned to him produced a second, written in a very proper

manner, and which has given great satisfaction. We cannot, however, find out upon what terms we are to continue in possession of this city, and shall not know, I suppose, until the Treaty is sent back ratified. I hope if you come across any commanding officer, whoever he may happen to be, you would induce him to have me sent for. The idea of garrisoning Canton till these obstinate brutes come to their senses is not a pleasant prospect and may last *ad infinitum*, without a prospect of there being anything more to do.—Your affectionate brother, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Sister

CANTON, *September* 10, 1858.

MY DEAR MINNY,—What a mass of letters I have got to thank you for, and all my sisters; but you know that I have not answered you personally because my mother likes to hear from me so much herself, and more than one letter to the same house is beyond my powers of composition. However, my arrears are becoming so frightful that I must break through my rule for once. I cannot tell for certain how many more letters I may date from this place, but I think four or five mails may do the work, and that the end of the year, after a twelvemonth's tedious occupation, will see us out of this. How glad I shall be when I am free! With any other people in the world we should have been away a month ago, but what with the humbled pride of the Chinese, their dilatoriness, and their insensate hope of somehow or another wriggling out of their present position by delay, we are most unnecessarily detained in this infernal hole. All the interests of the Chinese point to getting rid of us as soon as possible. Their trade is stopped, consequently their revenue suffers; the ordinary traffic of the town is scarcely alive, and a large majority of the inhabitants won't return to their homes till we are gone; and yet one month's time would remove all these difficulties, for they

have only got to pay a miserable million and a quarter and restore the former intercourse which existed between us. This sort of existence really becomes a waste of life. We have got Albert Smith [34] out here. I have just been lunching with him, and he dines with me the day after to-morrow. It really seems hardly worth his while coming out here for merely a month. I defy him to see much of the Chinese in that time. The results of his observations will be about upon a par with those of the foreigner at Mrs. Leo Hunter's picnic, who was going to write a history of British Institutions and Customs upon the strength of a fortnight's residence in England. It is wonderful, my dear Minny, how my health has stood out here . . . in fact, I am getting too fat. . . . I wrote to my mother about a month ago to buy for me my Cross of the Bath. . . . I find they give you one, which I was not aware of when I wrote; I thought they gave you a pasteboard one, and made you buy a proper one yourself. If this reaches you in time, pray stop her from buying one, and if it is already bought see if you can get it exchanged for something else. This is a most disgraceful scrawl, but I am writing in the dark and I fear a dull, stupid letter, but I only meant to have a little chat. I must now dress to go and meet the Bishop of Victoria at dinner. . . .—Your affectionate brother, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Sister

CANTON, *September* 25, 1858.

MY DEAR FANNY,—I do not think I have written to you yet since I have been away from England, and you, I am sure, have been constant enough in writing; but you know the frightful odds I have to contend against, they are certainly rather overwhelming. Much as your letters amuse me and give me pleasure, I heartily join with you in wishing that each one you write may of necessity be the last. . . . The hitch is now at Shanghai, where the two Imperial Commissioners were to have a

second interview with Lord Elgin, to arrange some minor details of the Treaty, and these two gentlemen have not yet made their appearance there according to agreement, but are keeping the little Earl waiting their pleasure, much to his disgust and annoyance. . . . Are they not a wearisome, worrying set ? I might be in my own home now if they were not such a childish race. . . . Our summer is at last gone, I am glad to say, after three weeks in September hotter than anything we have had all through the summer. The monsoon is at last changing, and we have fine cool breezes and plenty of rain. . . . How I should like to have been with you [*at the seaside*], instead of fretting away one's existence in this damned hole, where there is nothing but pigtail from morning till night. By the way, the only amiable trait in their habits, or which in any way reconcile them to me, is that they eat cats. You should see them carrying them about the streets in baskets for sale, it would make your flesh creep. . . . —Your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Sister-in-Law, Mrs. Stephenson

CANTON, *September 26*, 1858.

MY DEAR JULIA,— . . . We have not yet heard that the Imperial Commissioners have arrived at Shanghai. . . . Lord Elgin has been waiting for them since the 3rd of the month. This . . . is Chinese all over; they think it dignified to keep people waiting, and if remonstrated with, tell the most unblushing falsehoods as an excuse. Canton is gradually filling again, but still none of the wealthier people are returning. . . . Merchants at Hong Kong complain that the trade with this place is at a perfect standstill ; even at Hong Kong the better class of shopkeepers still remain absent. In the meanwhile our Allies the French are busy with operations in Cochin-China. They have removed all their force there, with the exception of 400 men who still

garrison Canton with us; and three or four vessels they still have in the river. They have taken a place called Taphan on the coast, a little to the south of Hué, the capital. There was no fighting whatever; the Chinese fired one round at the ships, and then ran. The French are fortifying themselves at this place preparatory to an advance upon the capital, but what on earth they will do when they get there is more than I can say. I believe that the whole expedition is intended as a sop to the *parti prêtre*, who have a great number of missionaries in this country, and according to their accounts half a million of converts, as many as they have in all the rest of China. Our friends the Russians too have not been idle, and during our negotiations have gained a large accession of territory in Manchuria, to the south of the Amoor, where they have collected a very considerable force. I believe it is to them we are indebted for the favourable treaty Lord Elgin has made with the Japanese, who being rather alarmed at the progress the Russians are making on the coast opposite them, are desirous of making a few powerful friends. . . . The N.E. monsoon has now set in, an atmospheric feat which has, strange to say, been unaccompanied by a typhoon or any very violent weather. I am delighted to hear you give so cheery an account of all the children. I long to hear Susie [35] play; my mother tells me her performance is admirable. . . . Pray thank Helen and Agnes for their amusing letters. I am afraid I have hardly time to write to them this mail. . . .—Your affectionate brother, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

HONG KONG, *October* 29.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—This must be a very short note, for I have a slight fever upon me and could not write much; in fact, if I had written to you last mail I should not be writing to you now, but I was afraid two empty mails would make you uneasy. But mind what

I tell you is literally the case, a slight fever and nothing more, so slight that I only saw the doctor yesterday, who says that two days' quiet will set me quite right, and I assure you I am looking forward to those two days with the greatest pleasure. I am not even in bed. . . .

CANTON, *November* 13, 1858.— . . . When last I wrote to you I was spending a few days at Hong Kong with Mr. Dent, who is the head of one of the greatest firms out here. He is a most hospitable, excellent fellow, with a good head and as good a heart, and although two or three of these days were passed in getting rid of a very slight attack of fever, I passed a very enjoyable time and was all the better for a little holiday. I have certainly been very lucky in escaping any serious attacks of fever, and although I have been twice affected by intermittent fever, both cases have been very slight indeed, and now that the cold weather has set in I shall get no more of it. It is rather a bad time for fever just now ; the second crop of rice is being cut, and the paddy-fields, which from March to December are nothing more than so many deep marshes, being covered with water the whole of that time for the cultivation of the rice, become exposed to the air when the rice is cut, and are supposed to produce more or less malaria ; our cases of fever are therefore just now steadily on the increase, although none of the cases are serious. We have built a theatre here, and have very tolerable performances. It really is a treat to get anything in the way of a little amusement. Our habitations, which have been converted into summer abodes, will now have to be made habitable again for the winter, by no means an easy task ; for, as we never reckoned upon passing a second winter here, we have been rather reckless in the way we have treated our abodes. However, the cold here is very moderate indeed, and it is only when sitting still writing that any inconvenience is felt from it. . . .—Your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

CANTON, *November* 27, 1858.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . We have received no news of Lord Elgin since his departure up the Yang-tze-kiang for Nankin. . . . He has got about 800 or 900 miles before him, and there is a very strong current in the river. It will be a very interesting trip, for he will go well into the heart of China, where no European except a missionary has been before, and he will pass Nankin, now in possession of the rebels. He takes with him a pretty good force with which to hold his own in case of need, viz. *Retribution* and *Furious* steam frigates, a steam sloop and two gunboats, and I think that so imposing a force will ensure him against insult. . . . Since I wrote above the mail has come in, and I see by the Treaty that we are to occupy Canton until the indemnity is all paid. . . . The rebels are certainly making great progress in this country; they have entered the province of Hwang Tung at four different points, and will soon be pillaging in all directions. Hwang has thought it necessary to look out for himself, and has thrown up works of defence round the town he is staying in. The present state of things cannot be an agreeable one for the Cantonese, and must certainly make them all the more desirous to pay the indemnity and get rid of us as soon as they can. I have not sent you any money home for some time, as the dollar [36] has been so low. It gradually went down from the beginning of this year until it reached 4s. 2d., but shortly after the Treaty was signed it rose to 4s. 7d., or 4s. 10d. . . . What chance is there of our getting any prize money allowed? . . . Tell Helen I am in despair about getting her a clean tail . . . but I will not forget her. . . .

CANTON, *December* 13, 1858.—I have just received your letter of the 25th October with a degree of pleasure which I leave you to guess. I cannot

thank you enough for the steps you have taken in getting me recalled. . . . My recall, however, has not come out by this mail. . . . I don't quite like yet giving myself up to the full pleasure of coming home, for fear of a disappointment, but if the next mail does bring my recall I don't know anything in the world that could give me greater pleasure. I think I shall come home straight,—travelling in these parts is too expensive,—but should I change my mind and not come home direct you shall hear from me by next mail. Instead of going to India I think I should go to Japan, if I could get a passage in a man-of-war, or to Borneo, or Java from Singapore, . . . I shall see when the time comes, for at present I hardly like to trust myself to these thoughts, and I dare say when the time comes I should be mad enough to do anything. One thing, however, you may be sure of—I will telegraph to you from Alexandria. I wish I were there now. . . . I hope they [*his mother and sisters*] will not be disappointed if I come back empty-handed. I really have seen nothing out here worth bringing home. All the best old china is to be bought in England, and the modern is not worth having. In curiosities I have seen little if anything of a pleasing character. . . . I assure you that I look upon the purchase of anything out here as a curiosity or object of interest as money thrown away. . . .

CANTON, *January* 26, 1859.—I received by the last mail your letter which announced the mistake which had been made about my returning home; but there is, I assure you, no necessity for your distressing yourself about my disappointment, for from the first I never could clearly understand how my recall could have been managed, and therefore directly placed a check on the conviction I should otherwise have freely indulged in, and my suspicions were strengthened by the absence of the necessary official letter. . . . However, all is for the best; events

have been and are going on which it would not have done for me to have missed. I dare say you recollect my mentioning about a year ago that a party of officers, of which I was one, were attacked when on a picnic party by the Chinese at a village about 8 miles north of Canton. About three weeks ago the marines were out marching for exercise, and on arriving at the very same village were also attacked by the Braves, who assembled in large numbers and kept up hostilities in their usual manner during the march home of the Brigade. This led to retaliation on our part which ought to have been inflicted a year ago. We marched out of the lines accordingly, about 1500 strong, and marched upon a bridge near this village leading to one of the strongholds of the Braves. The bridge was defended by a *tête-de-pont* mounting 11 guns, with another battery of four 24-pounders on the other side. The navy co-operated beautifully, arriving in gunboats at about 800 yards from the bridge, just as we reached a village at the same distance from it on its front. The Chinese fired very accurately for a few minutes until we brought our small guns into play, and threw out a few skirmishers, when, [? *after*] a judicious discharge of a few shell and minié balls, together with some shells of rather a larger size from the gunboats, the Chinese, seeing the bluejackets, who had landed upon the opposite side of the river, threatening the bridge in reverse, evacuated their batteries and took to their heels, and we have never seen another Brave from that day to this. We destroyed their guns and occupied the village, their headquarters, making some further excursions that afternoon to some neighbouring villages of very large size, which we found completely deserted—the inhabitants, Braves and all, having left them in an awful state of alarm. We could see the distant hills covered with fugitives watching our movements. The next day we advanced some 8 or 10 miles farther into the country, which presented a very curious appearance, for all the near villages were abandoned, while in the more distant ones the inhabitants were all

submission and humility, waiting to receive us outside, with pieces of red paper in their hands, similar ones being posted upon their houses, a token of submission and welcome. We returned to our village at the bridge that night, and after burning it to the ground the following morning, returned to Canton. Having made this satisfactory impression upon the Braves it was thought desirable to go a little further ; accordingly, a few days later, it was notified to Pih-Kivei, Governor of Canton Province, that we now intended to visit Fat-shan, a very large and important town, where a great trade is carried on, and near which place Keppel fought a very plucky action in 1857. We went accordingly, and were received in the most peaceable and friendly manner, though, if we had gone there a month ago it must have been after fighting our way there. Some further expeditions of this kind are in contemplation, but whether they will end peaceably or not is more than one can say. All this is the right thing, and will do a great deal of good by showing the Chinese that we will go into their villages, or anywhere else we like, and so destroy the inviolability of these places. Until we had done this we had done nothing, but by a good use of the next month left before us, before the rains begin, we may still make up for lost time. It may astonish you that all this should be going on when peace has been declared, but these rascals, Emperor and all, no more care for treaties or anything connected with honourable conduct than if no such thing existed. We are now anxiously expecting the return of Lord Elgin from Shanghai, and the arrival of Bruce from England. . . .—Your affectionate brother, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

CANTON, *January* 28, 1859.

MY DEAR MOTHER,— . . . Lord Elgin is still at Shanghai and likely to remain there. He certainly does his work remarkably well. . . . His trip up the Yang-

tze-kiang was well conceived and well done, and must have opened the Chinese eyes as well as our own. A narrative of his proceedings since he has been out here would make a very interesting book, and I have no doubt that such a one will be written by Mr. Oliphant, one of Lord Elgin's attachés. . . .

CANTON, *March* 13, 1859.— . . . Ever since our little affair with the Braves on the 8th January we have been marching or moving by water into the interior to show ourselves to John Chinaman, and show him that we will go wherever we like, and disabuse him of the lies purposely spread by the Mandarins to the effect that we were everything that was infamous, and in the habit of committing every horror under the sun, and that we dare not leave Canton or enter their towns and villages. This last is the fifth expedition we have made, and it has done an immense deal of good. Wherever we have gone we have been well received by the people, and with the most abject servility, and touching inquiries after our health by the Mandarins, who at heart hate us cordially and would insult us in any way they could if they dared, though I must give them the credit of being in many instances most polished in their manners, and really very gentlemanly; though at the same time, with a great deal of refinement in their ideas and bearing, they are a lying, treacherous set. The trip we have just made was up a river called the West River, which flows into the sea near Macao. We went up it for a distance of about 200 miles, farther a great deal than it had ever before been explored by Europeans, except by missionaries. It was a very fine stream, about a mile broad, where we entered it, and 700 or 800 yards at the highest point we reached, with a channel all the way for vessels the size of a frigate. The scenery was generally very beautiful, and, taking into consideration the absence of picturesque towns and ruined castles, was superior to either the Rhine or the Danube. There was one gorge in the hills which the river ran through

which was as fine as anything I have ever seen of the kind for river scenery. It would be a grand highroad for trade if there were any towns of importance, but there are none upon it, and it is therefore quite useless in that respect. Our force consisted of 9 gunboats, which towed 2 Chinese vessels, each carrying about 800 soldiers, with a few field guns. The life on board these Chinese boats was rather amusing, and we all enjoyed the novelty of the thing very much. As we advanced up the river it was quite melancholy to see the destruction done by the rebels, increasing as we advanced; they had left their marks everywhere. Each town had been more or less burnt, and one entirely destroyed—villages and joss-houses in many instances a heap of ruins; they seemed to be inveterate against the latter and never to spare them, pretending religion to be at the bottom of their rebellion, when, in fact, they are nothing more than a formidable band of ruffians and outcasts of every description who have discovered the impotency of the ruling powers and brave them with impunity. You cannot have a better proof of the decrepitude of this Empire, which I cannot but think is on the eve of its dissolution, though how this vast country will be eventually disposed of it is not easy to see, but that it will shortly break up is, I think, inevitable. The system of estrangement from other countries which has been pursued by China is assuredly contrary to nature, and I think China's day is come. Lord Elgin unexpectedly left China for England on the 3rd, and on the 19th Sir M. Seymour leaves in the *Calcutta* for the same charming destination; he is about to be relieved as Admiral on this station, and goes to meet the new Admiral at Singapore. Mr. Bruce has not yet arrived, but we expect him about the end of the month. He will, shortly after his arrival, I should think, go up to the north to exchange ratifications of the Treaty. . . . I was very sorry to hear by last mail that you had had a bad fall. . . . I cannot have you tumbling about the house when I

am not there to pick you up. . . .—Ever your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

CANTON, *April* 11, 1859.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . I should have been glad to get away before the summer, as I have just had another touch of fever which, though trifling, still shows that it is in me. This was followed by a nasty boil. . . . I am out to-day for the first time. . . .

CANTON, *May* 3, 1859.—Bruce and his suite have at last arrived and will very shortly go north and enter upon what I hope will be the last stage of the Chinese business. The new Admiral [37] has also arrived. . . . Rumours are current that the Chinese have rebuilt and garrisoned the forts at the mouth of the Pei-ho. . . . In anticipation of resistance the Admiral sends up a force of gunboats and steamers of larger size but small draught of water, and the General sends up with them 500 marines and a company of engineers. These go nominally as an escort to Bruce on his way to Pekin, but are at the same time sufficient to render considerable assistance to the Admiral should he meet with any opposition at the Pei-ho. My own impression is that they, the Chinese, will do all they can to impede us in our attempt to reach Pekin for the exchange of ratification of the Treaty, and that they may therefore make some show of resistance at the mouth of the Pei-ho, but that when this is overcome and Bruce is well on his way to Tien-tsin, then the Chinese will repeat their conduct of last year, ignore the acts of their officers in resisting us, get frightened, and eventually exchange the ratification. If, however, matters should turn out differently from what I have described, and Bruce find it impossible to get to Pekin without a large force, we must then wait for reinforcements from England or India and commence another Chinese war next year. Will

the country stand this? However, I have little fear of this alternative. . . .—Your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

CANTON, *June* 20, 1859.

MY DEAR MOTHER,— . . . In another fortnight we shall hear how the Embassy will be received at Pekin. I am confident all will go right. . . . So we are to have war [38] in Europe—war to the knife! I don't suppose we shall long keep out of it, though I believe it would be the best and wisest course for England to keep aloof if she can. What a tremendous nuisance it is being such a long way from England! Here we are at the end of June with news only of the end of April, and still in ignorance as to whether war has in reality commenced, and by the time you read what I am writing you will probably have forgotten when the war did begin. Since I last wrote to you I have been to Macao for a week to have a look at our friends the Portuguese. Such delicious air! A breeze blowing incessantly, morning, noon, and night. You lie here in your bed like a spread eagle, with all your legs and arms as far apart as you can stretch, and when you get to a place like Macao, where an incessant breeze sends you to sleep and really refreshes you, it is too much enjoyment.—Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

CANTON, *July* 20, 1859.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—This mail will bring you the news of as ugly a reverse as our navy has ever experienced. . . . As yet we know nothing more than what the papers will tell you. . . . Bruce, I know, had orders to go up to Pekin at all risks, so that probably he had no option in ordering the Pei-ho to be forced;

but I am afraid the manner in which that operation was conducted cannot be criticised so lightly. The attack was commenced too late in the day, namely, 2.30, and the landing of the men as late as six o'clock was more objectionable still; landing at all at such a low state of the tide was unpardonable, and the report of the officer sent to ascertain if a landing was practicable is open to very severe censure, for a landing was, in point of fact, impracticable, whereas he reported the reverse. However, we must be very cautious in expressing our opinion until we learn more particulars. One thing is pretty certain, the task imposed upon the Admiral was far beyond the means at his disposal. You have no idea how completely taken aback we all were at this sad news. We are evidently in for another war which will keep us all here for a considerable time longer. And now what is to be done? We shall want 10,000 men to get up to Pekin after this reverse. The war party will be in the ascendant, and these Mongols will fight better than they did the other day. This time the thing must be done well and systematically, for we have got Russians to deal with as well as Chinese. But where are the necessary reinforcements to come from? I doubt if India can supply the number of men we should require to make up the above strength, and we certainly can expect no help from the French. In the meantime, we must guard against hostilities at Canton, which it would be the most natural thing in the world to expect with any other people, but I should not be at all surprised if we remained perfectly quiet. There is not the slightest appearance of any forthcoming disturbance at present. I hope I shall get a good long letter from you in answer to this, telling me what is likely to be done in consequence of this unfortunate business. . . .

CANTON, *August* 10, 1859.— . . . Your disgust and that of everyone else in England must now be complete at the thrashing we have had at the Taku forts, and

at the complete failure of Lord Elgin's much-vaunted treaty. The American Minister who started for Pekin immediately after the action, by a river a few miles north of the Pei-ho, has not yet been heard of, by which I conclude he has got to his destination all right. If such be the case, and it should turn out that we could have got to Pekin by that route as well, there will, I think, then be grounds for a very grave charge against Bruce or the late Government, though I cannot think that any Government would, at such a distance from home, give binding orders to any Minister to go to Pekin by the Pei-ho and, if necessary, to force his way up, but under all circumstances to take that route, without leaving him some discretion how to act in the event of obstacles being thrown in his way which he had not the power to overcome. No political news of any kind has reached us from the north. The Emperor has as yet made no sign, and except that it is rumoured that he has declared the whole affair to be a mistake, and that he is quite willing to receive Mr. Bruce if he will only come by another route, there has been no communication made to Bruce as yet. In the meantime all is quiet in the rest of China, and except a kidnapping row which took place the other day at Shanghai, but in which there was nothing political whatever, things are going on as before. . . . Now what I want you very much to let me know is what steps the Government will take in the matter. . . . The French and English Governments between them ought to send out 12,000 men; without that, in addition to what is here, we ought not to try to get to Pekin, indeed, 15,000 would not be a man too many. . . . It is now two years and a half since this force left home, and yet to this day it is not settled by the War Office what pay and allowances we are to receive. . . . I want sadly some books; would it bore you to make a nice selection for me, and send them out overland by the first opportunity? I should like a volume or two of good sermons, and a good work upon the Communion—Bishop Wilson or Wilber-

force, but that I should leave to you. I should like one or two other books of a solid, substantial kind, and one or two more of lighter reading, such as any good novel that has lately appeared. There are also two military books I am much in want of "Simmons on Court Martials" and "Regulations for Conducting the Musketry Instruction of the Army." Half a dozen bark tooth brushes would be very acceptable. I am also in much need of a small case of cutlery containing a good pair of nail-scissors, a nail rasp, and a small pen-knife with two blades. Maria gave me a very nice little case when I went to the Crimea of this very kind. I hope you will not mind all this trouble, which I am afraid is a great deal. . . .

CANTON, *August* 22, 1859.— . . . Since my last letter little or no news has reached us except that the American Minister who started for Pekin by the back way, immediately after the affair of the 25th June, has been well received by the Emperor, and is probably at Shanghai again by this time, where it is very probable he will try and make matters square between Bruce and the Emperor ; and I have every reason to believe that if an opening offers itself by which he can decently get to Pekin without compromising the honour of the country, Bruce will take advantage of it and go on there after all. But what a painful position this success of the American Minister places Bruce in ! and what an argument for the peacemongers ! However, unless a good strong force is sent out here which will enable us to go to Pekin straight without a check, and by the Pei-ho forts in the course of the spring, we shall never regain our prestige in China. Our future dealings with China will no longer be the same that they have been hitherto ; other influences will prevail which will prevent us from having it all our own way, and going to war with China when we like and on any pretext. The progress Russia is making on the Amoor with a future view to a portion of this Empire, and her in-

creasing influence at the Court of Pekin, are ominous signs of the times. The French, too, have not embarked in this war for nothing; they feel the growing importance of the East, and the necessity for a first-rate power having a voice in the affairs of this part of the world, which in future she always will, and that is why she has done all she could to get a square foot of ground in China. I feel sure that if we mean to regain our footing here we must do it now or never. By the way, I may just as well mention, *par parenthèse*, that one of the apparently great blunders of the attack on the Pei-ho forts has, I believe, a different construction from what was originally put upon it. I am told that landing the men to attack the South Fort was not done entirely with the view of capturing it, but that the gunboats were all in such a predicament that a diversion was absolutely necessary to save them from destruction, and thus the men were sacrificed to save the shipping; unfortunately in war such extreme measures are sometimes necessary. I must trouble you once more to forward a letter to Versailles,[39] for those good people never date their letters by any chance, and I have therefore no more idea of where their house is than if it was up in the moon. I hope you will send the books I wrote for overland, and that there will be plenty of them and a good variety.—Your affectionate brother, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

CANTON, *September* 10, 1859.

MY DEAR MOTHER,— . . . Your last letter, which left the first mail in July, contained very cheerless news. The loss of two such old friends as the Bishop [40] and Mr. Hamilton [41] was indeed heavy to come upon me at once; I feel them both most deeply. The affection and deep interest the dear old Bishop so long showed for me I trust I shall never forget. Such kindness as I have received at his hands can never be surpassed, and springing as it did from associations so dear to one's

memory of former days rendered his conduct to me doubly pleasing. . . . Mr. Hamilton's loss will be long felt by William and Julia and will cause a great disruption of their family party. I shall be glad to hear from you what their future intentions are, where they propose to live, and who will live with them, etc.; pray write to me a good deal about it. The news brought by this last mail gives such an unsatisfactory account of the state of affairs in Europe that I begin to doubt whether the Government will feel disposed to send a large force out here and engage in so distant a war—though I hardly see how they can get out of it. I wish you would ask William, as I probably shall not have time to write to him by this mail, if he would, *in the event of nothing being done in the north of China next year*, try to make another effort to get me brought home. I shall soon be second Captain in my regiment, and therefore very near my promotion, which certainly makes it very desirable I should now be doing regimental duty. . . .

CANTON, *September* 23, 1859.—Many thanks, my dear mother, for your last letter. . . . I am much grieved to hear your account of poor Fanny's sufferings—it quite upset me. Her resignation is quite beautiful, and makes one feel all the more deeply for her. . . . The idea of any disturbance being got up against us at Canton seems to be subsiding, in fact this Province has enough to do to take care of itself against the rebels, who have again broken out and are making the Chinese authorities very uneasy. We have had dreadful stormy weather this summer, including two or three typhoons which have caused an enormous number of shipwrecks, and the worst time, viz. the change of the monsoon, is yet to come; so that probably this year will be more prolific of disasters from storms than any preceding ones. We still keep on the even tenor of our way; our great dissipation is our theatre, where we have most excellent performances

once a week, officers and men acting alternately. It contributes much to our vitality, in fact a little more such excitement would be very acceptable.

CANTON, *October* 10, 1859.— . . . Your account of poor Fan is more cheering, and altogether your letter was more satisfactory than the two or three preceding ones. . . . We have just heard that the 67th has left Calcutta for Canton,—out of the frying-pan into the fire, —and we expect them here in a week or ten days. They will shortly be followed by the 3rd Buffs, and if the Government at home takes up the Emperor of China's gauntlet, which of course they must, these will be followed later by further reinforcements. . . . I hope your Cumquots have by this time reached you. . . . The tea you ask for you get, I assure you, much better in England than I can get it here; it really is not worth while sending you any. I have never yet tasted any out here so good as I can get any day I like in England. It would be worse than sending coals to Newcastle. I am afraid that you are not sufficiently alive to the fact that the best of everything under the sun is to be got in that horrid old country England. Time continues to drag its slow length along out here. The Cantonese continue very quiet and orderly, and any little projects they may have in view for our amusement this winter will now be effectually smothered by the arrival of two additional regiments in our garrison. Next Friday we have another performance in our theatre. You would be amused to see the boxes full of officers each using a fan,—at church the same thing,—all the people in China use them, down to the lowest of the low. Scavengers carrying their loads of perfume out of the city, and halting to rest, will sit down and take out their fans, so you must not think us effeminate—not, however, that I ever use such a thing. And now God bless you, my dear mother, and keep you in health and spirits.

HONG KONG, *October* 29, 1859.—Since last I wrote

there has been no change in our relations with the Celestials, who are, I conclude, entrenching themselves behind their pride and obstinacy, and perhaps strengthening themselves by works more easy to overcome. . . . I have completely shaken off for the present all symptoms of intermittent fever, and have not had an attack for the last six weeks, so that I hope I am quit of it till the spring at all events, though it will be perhaps too much to expect to get rid of it altogether as long as I remain in China. I am staying down at Hong Kong again for a few days, and dined last night with Admiral Hope, who has apparently quite recovered from his wounds, and is very keen about attacking the Pei-ho forts again. . . . I have but little to write about, and this note is merely intended to tell you that I am all alive and kicking. . . .

CANTON, *December* 13, 1859.— . . . The connection between the General and his staff is at length likely to be broken off; he is not to command the force going to the North. . . . Having been offered the command at Canton while the operations in the North are going on, he has preferred sending in his resignation, which will, I believe, go home by this mail. I cannot tell you what a relief even this prospect is. The realisation of it will be still more agreeable; the awakening from a horrid nightmare or Sindbad at length relieving himself of the incubus of the hideous old man who would sit upon his shoulders for so long, will give you some little idea of the relief we shall all feel before long. It will now soon be over, thank Heavens! and then I shall only hope that my memory may fail to bring back all the annoyances and insults which a sense of duty has compelled me to submit to. I had a charming little trip last Saturday to a town called Fat-shan, about 15 miles off, in the Admiral's tender. Our new arrival, Admiral Jones,[42] was there, whose acquaintance I renewed, having known him when in the *Princess Royal*, which brought our battalion home from the Crimea. We were about twenty-

five in all, and had a very agreeable day. Fat-shan is a very important town, where a very extensive trade is carried on. When we last visited it, which was in January last, there were very strong barriers across the river, made of double rows of piles, sunk into the bottom chained together, and the intervals filled up with stones. These were all now removed, which we looked upon as a very peaceable sign for the future; as, if they contemplated creating disturbances down here during the operations in the North, they would hardly have removed these important defences from a town which ought to be one of the first objects of our attack. In fact, the whole appearance of affairs in this neighbourhood is so pacific that I do not anticipate any interruption of our present relations with the Cantonese Government. I have not heard anything of my own fate as yet, but if I am not to go to the North . . . it will not be very long before I am on my way home. I do not intend remaining another summer out here, that is Canton, in fact the doctors have strongly warned me against it, and I do not feel at all disposed for another series of attacks of intermittent fever, which will get worse every year. I was so glad to get a letter from Fan by the last mail; pray give her my best thanks for it, and tell her how glad I was to hear from her own self a more satisfactory account of her health. . . .

December 28, 1859.— . . . I shall be very glad to get out of this climate, for it is beginning to disagree with me sufficiently to prevent me keeping to my work as uninterruptedly as I like; however, I really hope my staff appointment in China is now drawing to a close. Fancy at my Christmas dinner the other day sitting next to a navy chaplain of the name of Jacob, son of old Jacob the bookseller in the High Street, Winchester! Wasn't it a funny meeting? We had such a long chat together about the old place and all its former inhabitants. Old

Uncle George [43] seems to have been [*one of*] his most intimate acquaintances. I wonder if you recollect him? Fancy talking about Uncle George, St. Cross, etc., at Canton! It seems strange jumbling such opposite ideas together. . . .

CANTON, *January* 13, 1860.— . . . Another letter —is this to be the last? or am I doomed to write a series of vapid epistles every fortnight to the end of my days? I return you my best thanks for your kind present of books—all I can say is that if I don't go to heaven after receiving that box of books it won't be *your* fault. But, joking apart, I really am very much obliged for all that was sent, and I am sure that it will do me a great deal of good. We are all picking up strength for the ensuing hot weather. The climate here for the last three months has been quite heavenly, and we are now enjoying such bracing weather as cannot fail to do us all good. Our sick list is very low, and we have no deaths. In another month's time we may expect the rainy season, which will last about six weeks, and then will come the dreadful heat again; however, I hope I shall not be here to enjoy it. . . . Upon my word, my dear mother, I can't write any more. I don't know what the divil (I mean the d——l) to say, except that I had a tooth stopped yesterday, which I mention as you like to know all my ailments. Once a fortnight is too much, I can't stand it.—Ever your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

You should have heard that sigh as I finished the letter.

To his Brother

CANTON, *January* 13, 1860.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—Your box of books, etc., has arrived quite safe, and I have my best thanks to offer for the trouble you have taken about them, and especially for the contributions you have made yourself. You could not have made a better selection; the books are

just what I wanted, grave and gay, and both excellent of their sort. The six volumes of Blackwood was a grand conception; I have a childish love for a well-told tale, and these are all first-rate. The theological branch is certainly, as you say, rather voluminous; still, it is just what I asked for, and though it would require a prolonged existence in a hermitage to master the whole, I hope I shall be able from time to time to digest a few home truths. . . . I am gradually getting hardened as to the future, and begin to feel a stoical indifference as to my fate, which, however, will produce a frightful reaction whenever the joyful news of my return arrives. We are all going on as quietly as usual. Kidnapping, however, is carried on to an awful extent out here, and is just now the permanent topic of interest. The Americans and Portuguese are chiefly engaged in this trade, which they carry on for the Spaniards, who will give enormous prices for a Chinaman landed in Cuba. The captain of a Yankee ship will pay a Chinese crimp $20 for a Chinaman. These crimps go to the neighbouring villages and kidnap those wretched people, which they succeed in doing to a great extent. The Chinese authorities sometimes succeed in arresting them, and then invariably behead them, so that the crime and misery produced by this abominable trade are quite shocking and may really lead to disturbances between ourselves and the Chinese, who are still unable wholly to discriminate between us and other foreigners.—Ever yours affectionately, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

CANTON, *February* 13, 1860.

MY DEAR MOTHER,— . . . You will have heard by this time that I am appointed D.A.G., which is pushing me up a peg, and placing me in a very nice position. The one I had previously held as A.A.G. was the appointment for a Division, the one I now hold is for an army. . . . I go down to Hong Kong, and

leave Canton for good and all, after living here for upwards of two years, on Wednesday next. I shall then have plenty to do, so that if you duly hear from me once a month instead of once a fortnight you will know that it is not owing to sickness. The appointment, together with the cold weather, has completely set me upon my legs again, and as I am now soon going to the north of China the change of climate will, I hope, eradicate all remnants of fever. I am sure you will be pleased with my appointment, although it will delay my return for a few months, because it would have been so very easy to have passed me over if they had wished it, and have placed me in the same boat with our ex-Chief, which would only have been the natural thing to expect ; besides that, my position in the regiment offered an admirable plea for recalling me without the slightest slur being thereby cast upon me ; so that I am sure you will view my detention here in its true light, and not allow yourself to be outdone by the garrison of Canton in offering your congratulations. I shall hope soon to merit them with the rest of our little army upon higher grounds than at present. . . . What an enormous distance we shall be from England ! It really looks quite awful on the map, if you trace the route by the Cape, which, after all, was the way I came, though not the way I hope to return by.

Fancy getting up to the Great Wall, which one used to read of as a child with such wonder ! If I do get up there I will certainly bring you back a brick, which I will previously throw at a Chinaman's head to enhance its interest. If I can only manage to visit Japan on my way back I shall then have plenty to talk to you about. . . . I want you to send me some ribbon for each of my orders, four in number. . . . If you could get me, at the same time, a diminutive cross of the Légion d'Honneur (chevalier's rank) I should be much obliged. If you will kindly ask William he will give you the money for it from me. . . .—Your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

CANTON, *February* 13, 1860.

Many thanks, my dear William, for your letter . . . you have probably heard by this time that I am appointed Deputy Adjutant-General to the force going to the north. The rise from Assistant to Deputy Adjutant-General is a great one, and, of course, very gratifying also, at least you would think so if you heard all the congratulations I have been receiving out here. . . . We shall, I believe, have a fine force out here . . . it will consist, I am told, of 10 or 11 English regiments, 3000 Sikhs, and 5 or 6 batteries of artillery, with probably 800 or 900 cavalry. I have no doubt the allied force that will be employed on shore will reach to 20,000 men and 70 guns, an army sufficient for anything if only the work is done quickly before sickness sets in. It will give me plenty to do, but I hope I shall be equal to it. . . . I do not suppose we shall leave here before May, that is to say, the General and Headquarter Staff, though some troops must shortly be sent on to secure some intermediate base for collecting our stores, means of transport, etc., which will be on an immense scale, because it is hard to say what supplies the country we are going to campaign in will produce, and therefore we must make provision ourselves for everything. Imagine the amount of forage that must be collected for some 7000 animals. The Commissariat will have plenty of work to do. What will be the length of time that will elapse before the Chinese come to terms is more than anyone can guess having to deal with such a wily, slippery people, who act upon no principle, but are guided solely by events as they happen, and then submit to what they call fate. All the information, however, which we receive tends to show that they are making great preparations to receive us, and I think myself that they will make a good fight of it. . . .—Ever yours affectionately, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

HONG KONG, *February 27*, 1860.

MY DEAR MOTHER,— . . . Your account of Fan is most cheering, and so is the prospect you hold out to me of being likely to get my battalion soon. I shall be ready to return whenever they send for me. The French General de Montauban,[44] with his staff, has just arrived ; their troops cannot be here before the middle of April, nor do I think the whole of ours will either, so I think we are here for another six weeks. . . . Whether there is much fighting or not one thing is quite certain, that there must be an army of occupation for a considerable time at all events . . . but happen what will, you must look to my promotion and not to the termination of this forthcoming war as being most likely to bring me home. . . .

HONG KONG, *March* 14, 1860.— . . . The arrival of Sir Hope Grant [45] and staff yesterday will be the means of effectually occupying all the spare time I had calculated upon before the departure of the mail. We hear of great preparations being made for us by the Chinese in the north. They now talk of 200,000 men being collected in the neighbourhood of the Taku forts (I told William 150,000 round Pekin, but what I now state is the latest information), also that they have means of laying the whole country under water for some miles inland. All this may be very probable, but reports of an enemy's disposition and strength must always be received with caution ; they are very often spread abroad by the enemy himself to create alarm. With the Chinese this is most especially the case, and we have had numerous proofs of it. With regard to the men, the more they collect the better ; they cannot employ beyond a certain number, and it may entice them to meet us in the open field, which would do more than anything to bring the campaign to a close. . . .

Hong Kong, *April* 14, 1860.— . . . We yesterday received the news that the Ultimatum sent in by Mr. Bruce and M. Bourboullon,[46] the French Minister, had been rejected by the Chinese, and an insolent answer returned as well, so nothing now remains but to give them a lesson they won't forget. Lord Elgin and Baron Gros are both expected out here by the next mail, though what on earth they will do when they are here is more than I can say. They surely will hardly make fresh overtures to the Chinese after the insolent manner in which they have rejected the last—that would be rather too undignified a proceeding. . . . I am very well, thank Heaven, and write more to tell you this than for any other reason. . . . I suppose if two mails were to pass without your hearing from me I should never be forgiven. . . .

Hong Kong, *April* 25, 1860.— . . . Our force is now collecting rapidly, French as well as ourselves, and by the middle of May we ought to be off. Bruce, however, is trying, they say, to patch up the rupture, and has sent in, so report runs, another ultimatum in a milder form. If this is true it is a great pity ; it cannot prevent hostilities and will only be misinterpreted into fear by the Chinese. . . . Sir Hope Grant, who went up to Shanghai the end of last month, returns to-morrow ; our troops will in the meantime have occupied Chu-san, of which he will bring us down the details. Our General seems an uncommonly nice person, quiet, good tempered, decided, and a thorough gentleman ; I am sure everyone will get on well with him, though experience warns me against compromising oneself by too premature an opinion. Our chief of the staff, Colonel Haythorne of the Royals, is a first-rate officer and as good a fellow, and as the same can be said of Colonel Mackenzie, 92nd Highlanders, and Deputy Quartermaster-General, you will see that my connection with the staff promises to be an agreeable one. The Sikh Cavalry, about 200 of whom have already arrived, seem a very promising body of men, and will, I think, do us good service. They are a

fine, wild-looking set, dark, with well-marked, prominent features, which are admirably set off by an ample red turban. They look as if they could fight, and I believe they can ; they have, at all events, the reputation of being first-rate horsemen and swordsmen. A battery of Armstrong's guns has arrived and excites great interest. I do not care much about the long range ; it may be useful now and then, but it will never influence very much the result of an action, I think—the shell is the formidable part and the accuracy of fire, and I expect great things from them. . . . I think too much about home, and feel sometimes as if I could in desperation burst the bands that tie me down here and rush away. However, this can't last for ever, and so, with another wish for our speedy meeting, I will once more say good-bye.—Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

HONG KONG, *May* 22, 1860.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . The greater part of our force has gone to the north to our rendezvous in the Gulf of Pecheli ; the cavalry and field artillery remain to the last and will leave Hong Kong in about ten days. The General and staff will then start immediately. . . . People are beginning to have misgivings again as to the probability of a campaign after all . . . and rumours are gaining strong ground that the Chinese will make overtures directly we gain footing on the shore of the Gulf of Pecheli. The French, however, out here seem to be of opinion that nothing will be done this year. They are not nearly ready, being very deficient in means of land transport. . . . A modification has been made in our staff by this mail ; they considered it too large at the War Office, and have ordered the appointment of chief of the staff to be done away with. Colonel Haythorne we shall therefore lose, and I am truly sorry for it. . . . The appointment of Colonel Bruce

as D.A.G. of the Indian troops with this force is also done away with, and they have taken away my Deputy Assistant. All this will give me a great deal more work, and much additional responsibility—I hope I shall be able to carry it through. The last news from Europe looks rather threatening. Lord John Russell seems to have spoken out in a manner that has given a death-blow to our alliance with the French. . . . It will be curious enough if a disunion should take place at the very moment when we are engaged in operations in the field. The position will be an awkward one and certainly quite novel. . . .—Ever your affectionate brother, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

I am still staying with John Dent, the most hospitable good fellow that ever lived.

To Lady Stephenson

HONG KONG, *May* 23, 1860.

MY DEAR MOTHER,— . . . Our General I like more and more as I get to know him. He is a fine, upright, determined fellow, a good man, and a thorough gentleman. I shall now be thrown in contact with him more than ever since the appointment of chief of the staff is done away with. We have had a wonderful start into the new year as far as weather goes, being now two-thirds through May and have had nothing but the most deliciously cool weather . . . the consequence is that the whole force, your humble servant among the number, are in wonderful health. You know that we have occupied Chu-san again, the island where such fearful mortality took place in the last war ; it turns out now to be the healthiest spot in the whole locality ! . . . You seem to be very much taken up with Japan at the present moment. I have not read Oliphant's book, but I am told that he paints things rather *couleur de rose*. There is no doubt, however, that it is a very interesting country, though their morals are not of

the purest. Dent, with whom I am staying, has just returned from there, and has amused me very much with his accounts of the place. . . .—Ever your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

HONG KONG, *June 7*, 1860.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . The General and Headquarter Staff leave here on the 11th, and about that day month we shall be disembarking, I hope, at the Pei-ho forts. The whole of the expedition except one squadron, King's Dragoon Guards, is embarked, but the N.E. Monsoon not having yet changed they are still hanging about Hong Kong. The General will remain a day or two at Shanghai to finally arrange matters with the French General, Montauban ; from thence we shall go to Tai-lien-wan, a magnificent harbour at the southern extremity of the promontory, which forms the eastern coast of the Gulf of Pecheli. This is the rendezvous for the whole of the shipping. From there we shall establish ourselves at the Foo, a very little harbour due south of Tai-lien-wan, at the extremity of the province of Chan-toy. We shall here form a depot to leave our supplies from the interior, and from there start for the attack of the Pei-ho forts, about 150–180 miles distant. I anticipate that our campaign will last about fourteen days, at the end of which time we shall be either at Tien-tsin, or as far as the Plenipotentiaries mean we should go. You may possibly have heard already that out of consideration for the feelings of our friends the French, the English army is not to land more than 10,000 men ! (the French not being able to land more than 7000), for fear, I suppose, that we should have too large a share of the glory. What do you think of that by way of truckling to the Alliance ? After what has transpired in Europe as to the Emperor's underhand, deceitful line of conduct, I now feel certain that his object in taking part in this war has been to endeavour so to

retard our operations in this distant part of the world that we may be the less disposed to interfere with his schemes in Europe. I have never been able satisfactorily to explain to myself till now why the French have tacked themselves on to us in an expedition from which they cannot possibly derive any national advantage, and in a country where they have not the slightest interest at stake. I believe the Emperor to be playing some deep, underhand game with us out here, the same as he has been doing in Europe. The French till within the last fortnight have always told us they could not be ready till the autumn, and that they felt sure nothing would be done this year. I have no doubt that was their conviction, based upon what they saw and heard going on around them, and which was nothing more than plans of the French Government for delay making themselves perceptible. We have just now learnt that Lord Elgin is on his way, and expect him to-day or to-morrow by the mail. He will have more to do when he comes than I thought would be the case a short time ago. Things are looking a little more complicated in China, but all to the disadvantage of the Chinese. The rebels taking advantage in all probability of the hostile intentions of the French and English have pushed on against the Imperialists with fresh vigour and have advanced close to Shanghai, threatening the town to such an extent as to induce the Chinese authorities actually to apply to us for assistance, with whom they are on the point of going to war. The consequence is that both the French and English have landed troops and occupied the gates of the town. This step has completely restored confidence amongst the Chinese, who have in consequence ceased to leave the town, which they were beginning to do. Is not such a contradictory state of things almost incredible? This progress of the rebels cannot fail, I think, to affect the progress of our war with the Emperor and cause the Plenipotentiaries to refrain more than ever from pushing him too far. A speedy termination of this business

begins to look a little probable; nevertheless, it is impossible to calculate upon what the "stolid arrogance," as Lord Elgin calls it, of this people may lead them to. . . .—Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

SHANGHAI, *June* 21, 1860.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am writing to you from Shanghai, where I arrived on the 16th June, the General and staff being on board, and the *Granada*, a P. & O. steamer chartered for the purpose, having the honour of conveying this valuable freight. We leave to-morrow for the Gulf of Pecheli, where we shall arrive probably on the 26th, and shall then form a depot on that coast, about 130 miles south of the Pei-ho, where we shall have to wait until the French are ready to commence the campaign, but when that will be Heaven only knows; the 15th July is the earliest day named, and they have promised to begin then, *or as soon after as they can get ready*. This is ominous, and we are almost beginning to despair of doing anything this year. . . . All this uncertainty and delay is very annoying. . . . Shanghai is a wonderful place equally so with Hong Kong, I mean as regards the English settlement, which is a grand proof of the energy and enterprising spirit of our merchants. The settlement is about 1¼ miles square, and is situated just outside the Chinese town, on the banks of a broad and deep river which runs into the Yang-tze-kiang. The whole river front is covered with a row of detached houses, more like palaces than anything else. The rebels are making great progress just here . . . and the Chinese inhabitants of Shanghai are so frightened at the idea of their attacking them here that they literally deserted the town altogether. We have left, however, about 400 marines and 600 Sikhs to protect the settlement, and as the French have about 400 men in addition I do not think there is much fear for this place. . . .

HEADQUARTERS, S.S. *Granada*, TAI-LIEN BAY, *July* 12, 1860.—I have received your letter by the mail of May 12, but all those that were sent by the previous mail which brought out Lord Elgin have been lost. The steamer with the mail ran upon a rock in Galle harbour . . . and almost everything on board was lost. The only thing that was saved belonging to me was the present Fanny sent me of William's portrait. Pray give her my best thanks for it ; the likeness is admirable, and it is a great pleasure to have it to look at now and then, in the absence of the original. I only wish your own had accompanied it. . . . We are waiting for the French, who have been keeping us waiting for a long time. . . . The business, I think, cannot be a long one, and would in fact have been over by this time, if the French had not been here. Nobody wanted them, and their presence only serves as an encumbrance. The climate of this part of China is quite lovely, I never felt a more delightful one ; we are all consequently in the best health, and have hardly any sickness whatever amongst the men. . . . I paid a visit to Lord Elgin yesterday, and he thinks very lightly of the resistance we are likely to meet with, and does not reckon upon the whole affair lasting beyond the autumn. He did not tell me this positively, but it was easily gathered from what he said. I must say I shall rejoice if his views prove correct, and we are saved from passing this winter out here. . . . I must return the compliment you have been pleased to make me about writing so often, and I trust we shall respectively keep up the good characters we have given each other. . . .—Ever your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

S.S. *Granada*, TAI-LIEN BAY,
July 12, 1860.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . It is a thousand pities they [*the French*] were ever allowed to meddle with

our affairs out here; they have nothing to do with China, having no interests commercially in the country whatever. They can't colonise, therefore the Saigon expedition is a farce, and setting their missionaries aside, for whom neither Government nor people care very much I should imagine, they have no business here whatever. There is not a Frenchman can tell you what they have come here to fight for; the result is they have done nothing but hamper and delay us. You can't imagine what a fine little force we have got; so well equipped and taken care of (perhaps rather too much so), in such good health, and behaving so well. I trust they will get through their work before rain and sickness set in. . . . I cannot tell you how much I like our General; we all live with him more like a comrade than anything else, and yet with all that no one would be wanting in respect to him in the slightest degree. He is firm, decided, and evidently a first-rate soldier, but so mild and gentle in his manner when giving reproof. He is very serious in his ideas on religious subjects, and every morning after breakfast, as regularly as clockwork, we have prayers and a chapter from the Bible read by the chaplain in the saloon (for we are still on board ship), at which all the staff, about fourteen in number, and the European servants attend. I never heard of any other General doing this. I shall be sorry when we part, though it will be on my way home. . . .—Ever, my dear William, your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

PEH-TANG, *August* 9, 1860.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am writing to you from Peh-tang, on the river of that name, about 8 miles north of the Pei-ho. I am writing in my tent, pitched in the middle of one of the forts in company with the General and Headquarters Staff and Probyn's regiment of irregular cavalry, the horses being picketed in the centre,

and forming a most picturesque group. We left Tai-lien Bay on the 26th of July, the French leaving Chefoo on the same day, and the two fleets, about 250 sail, rendezvoused about 20 miles off the Pei-ho forts on the 28th. On the 1st of August 5000 French and English landed at this place, whence we proceed with our whole forces, which are now disembarked, to attack the Pei-ho forts the day after to-morrow, the 11th. Our landing here was unopposed, although two forts mounting 24 guns command the entrance to the river; but they were unoccupied, and with the exception of about 50 or 60 Tartar cavalry, who were watching our movements, we saw no enemy at all. We had to disembark in the water and wade through three-quarters of a mile of mud before we got to *terra firma*. The force bivouacked on a raised road running from Peh-tang to the Pei-ho across a flat, swampy country. This was the only safe, dry ground we could find, as we were afraid of quitting the road for fear the tide should come in at night. We intended attacking the forts early next morning, not knowing they were abandoned; this we ascertained, however, during the night, and so it ended in our taking peaceable possession of the town. This town contains about 20,000 inhabitants, and is built entirely of mud; the streets are full of it, and mud surrounds the whole place. I never saw such a wretched place in my life. But with all this drawback the troops are in wonderful health. The force opposed to us is chiefly Tartar cavalry, and the country between us and the Pei-ho seems literally studded with forts. The Chinese force, however, is reckoned rather low, only 15,000 I am told, and the Emperor, they say, is hardly able to pay them; but I do not quite believe this, and think we shall [*find*] a much larger force opposed to us. We made a reconnaissance the other day to see what the road was like, and had a little skirmish with the enemy. They behaved very well and moved very steadily, and I trust that in a day or two we may be more intimately acquainted.

August 10.—The rain, which fell heavily all yester-

day, is beginning again this morning, and will in all probability have rendered this muddy country so swampy and impassable for our artillery as to necessitate postponing our march until the 12th or perhaps the 13th, for the General will not move on a Sunday if he can help it. Lord Elgin is with us, living on board ship in the river, and the other day he received an overture from the Viceroy of the Province to the effect that if he would keep his troops quiet, he, the Viceroy, would on his part give orders to restrain the impetuosity of the Chinese troops, and would endeavour to keep back those greedy of honour from rushing forward to the fight. Lord Elgin referred him to the terms of Mr. Bruce's ultimatum, and told him that until those were agreed to, he could not stop his military preparations. . . . You must not be surprised if you receive no letter from me next time. . . .—Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

TAKU FORTS, *August* 23, 25, 1860.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—You will have heard by telegraph long before this reaches you of our success: the Taku forts have all fallen, and all the fortifications on the Pei-ho, including Tien-tsin, are in our possession. Two regiments moved up there to-day, and the remainder of the army will follow as soon as possible. You will, I hope, be all pleased in England at the result of our operations. Sir Hope Grant has come out uncommonly well, and has shown in the plan of his campaign great firmness and steadiness of purpose, and great self-reliance. He resolved to attack upon the north side, which was undoubtedly the right course, as events have proved, but the French General objected to this and sent in an official protest against it, asserting that the south was the proper side to attack first. Although he sent men to take part in the action he was not present himself, but remained in the rear

en petite tenue, a non-official observer of what was going on, implying that he did not approve of what was going on, and would not countenance it by his presence. He did not come on the field till after the action was over. How mortified he must feel now at his want of judgment, which is now officially recorded against himself in his own handwriting! He would give his little finger, I should think, to have his letter back again. On the morning of the 12th August we marched our whole force out of Peh-tang; there is but one road leading out of the town, a raised causeway running for three miles through a swamp. It had been raining a good deal a day or two previously, and we were afraid that this swampy ground would be impracticable for cavalry and guns; however, as it turned out, it did very well. The 1st Division, with the General and staff, went by this road to attack the enemy's works in front—the 2nd Division, with the cavalry, branched off this causeway to the right soon after leaving Peh-tang, and made a sweep round so as to place themselves on the left flank and rear of these works. They moved along a track in marshy ground, which, after three or four miles, brought them on to hard ground, where the cavalry and guns were able to deploy. The French were with the 1st Division, which soon came up with the enemy's first works. We halted within 1500 yards to let the 2nd Division come up, which had a longer way to go than we had, and also to reconnoitre the enemy; we found them to be chiefly cavalry, about 5000, who began to dismount and man their works, while some rode out to their right flank to show front against us. As the 2nd Division approached Sin-ho the Tartars rushed out of that entrenchment in force to attack them, cheering lustily as they advanced. I do not quite believe they knew the kind of enemy they had in their front; they had never fought with Europeans before, and their ideas about cavalry must have been limited to that of their own country—Mongolia. As they approached, the Armstrong guns

now for the first time opened upon them ; still they advanced and rode right up to a battery of 6-pounders. The cavalry then came down upon them and sent them flying in all directions, leaving about 200 killed and wounded on the field. As soon as we saw the 2nd Division engaged, the 1st commenced its attack, deploying an Armstrong battery and a 9-pounder into line, a French battery being on our left. We opened fire at about 1200 yards, gradually advancing, and after about half an hour we silenced the enemy's fire and entered their first works, through which we advanced on to their second. By this time the Tartar cavalry had been driven back by the 2nd Division, and came flying through Sin-ho along the causeway leading to Sang-koo, getting a severe pounding from our guns as they went. The day was now our own, with a loss on our side of about 2 killed and 21 wounded, and we bivouacked on the road just beyond Sin-ho to the S.W. On the 14th we advanced against Sang-koo, which is a large town and encampment about three miles and a half round, protected by a low battlemented wall and two ditches, one being about 18 feet broad. This was entirely an artillery action, the General's tactics being to fire upon these mud works until the enemy's fire is silenced thoroughly, so as to save his own men's lives as much as possible while storming. We deployed 7 batteries into line, 4 English and 3 French, opening fire at about 1000 yards and gradually advancing, firing at intervals until we got within 400 yards; such a frightful fire was then brought to bear upon the place as no enemy could stand, and a column of Rifles entered the works unopposed, followed by the French in another part of the works, exactly eighteen minutes after. The enemy must have lost that day about 400 killed and wounded ; we had one man mortally wounded, and two others, severely and slightly—the French one killed and six wounded, showing the wisdom of the General's tactics. After occupying Sang-koo, where our headquarters are now established, we made preparations

for attacking the Taku forts, which include all those on either side of the mouth of the Pei-ho. A few days' delay was necessary to enable our heavy guns to be brought up, the General being determined as usual to spare his men as much as possible and not to attack till he was thoroughly prepared. On the morning of the 21st, 1500 men of the 2nd Division, with two batteries and some heavy guns, and 1000 French, with one battery, having been told off for the attack, and mortar batteries constructed during the night, the fight began by the Chinese opening a heavy fire upon us at daylight from the upper North Fort, which we were attacking, and from the forts and numerous batteries on the south side. A heavy cannonading was kept up on both sides till we advanced to the assault at about a quarter to eight. We then found the fort to be very strongly defended. It was surrounded by two ditches, the outer 18, the inner 15 feet wide; the space between the ditches, about 20 feet, was covered with sharp stakes about 2 feet out of the ground, and planted at intervals of 3 or 4 inches from each other; the space between the inner ditch and the wall was planted with stakes in like manner, and formed most serious obstacles. The Chinese garrison behaved nobly, no European troops could have made a more plucky and obstinate resistance. They kept our storming parties some considerable time in a hand-to-hand fight, and it was not till 8.30 a.m. that we were masters of the fort. I must refer you to the *Times* correspondent for further particulars as to the surrender of the remaining forts, which are all now in our possession, including Tien-tsin, where Lord Elgin is at this moment with two regiments and a battery as a garrison. We have captured about 500 guns, and the loss of the Chinese on the 21st must have been at the least 1000 killed and wounded. We took, moreover, 2000 prisoners; the whole Chinese force is disbanded, and Lord Elgin has it all his own way. The war may now be considered over, and, I think, very satisfactorily; our own

loss on the 21st was 201 killed and wounded, that of the French about 100. I hope a few months more will see me back amongst you all. I long for it.—Ever your affectionate brother, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

CAMP, 8 MILES EAST OF PEKIN.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We have had a great change in the state of affairs here since you last heard from me. After the capture of the Taku forts the Chinese made apparently such an abject submission, that we thought the war was at an end; but Chinese deceit and cunning are not so easily beaten. On the 24th August, Lord Elgin started for Tien-tsin, and there the Chinese agreed to all the terms we demanded, sending down Kwi-liang as Commissioner to sign a convention previous to Lord Elgin's departure for Pekin to sign the Treaty. When the day came, however, for signing the convention Kwi-liang acknowledged that he had no power to do so. This was on the 8th of September, so that by means of a most deliberate falsehood and systematic course of deceit of the most impudent kind Lord Elgin was done out of fourteen days, a delay most valuable to the enemy and of some little consequence to us. It was very lucky, as you will see by and by, that this trickery was discovered before we left Tien-tsin, for so confident was our great plenipotentiary that all was right and straightforward, that at one time he intended going all the way to Pekin, after signing the convention, with an escort of 100 cavalry only. Kwi-liang, moreover, had asked of him, as a special favour, not to bring any guns with him, as he said they would produce a panic. Lord Elgin actually consented to this, and although, after being remonstrated with, he agreed to increase his escort to 1000, still we were to take no guns with us. As soon as it was discovered that the Chinese were trifling with us, a force was immediately detached to march to Pekin. We started accordingly on the 9th of September,

making easy marches, for the roads in China are not macadamised. On the way the Chinese again made professions of peace, and by the time we had got half-way Lord Elgin a second time felt so satisfied the enemy would give in that he sent your friend Mr. Parkes on to Zung-chow, which is about 60 miles from Tien-tsin and 10 short of Pekin, to communicate with these people. He returned with information that the Chinese agreed to everything—that our troops were to halt four miles short of Zung-chow, while Lord Elgin was to go on to the town with an escort and sign the convention. On the 17th Parkes started again for Zung-chow to make final arrangements, with an escort of 20 cavalry under a flag of truce, two of the Embassy, the *Times* correspondent, and three officers. We followed on the 18th with a force of 1900 infantry, 700 cavalry, and 15 guns. The French had a force of about 1000 and 6 guns. On arriving near the ground where the Chinese proposed we should halt, instead of seeing Chinese Commissioners we found an army of Tartars drawn up, 30,000 strong, occupying a position nearly five miles long; the rascals had been deceiving us all along, and thought to get us into a trap and annihilate us. We immediately halted to see what all this meant. In the meantime Parkes, escort and all, had left Zung-chow again, to meet us on the road and show us the way, when they, to their surprise, came across this army drawn up to bar our further progress. He at once rode back with 17 troopers to remonstrate with the authorities at Zung-chow against this apparent act of treachery, leaving Colonel Walker and four dragoons within the enemy's lines, who agreed to wait for him there till he returned. We could see these five moving about in the enemy's position quite plainly. The enemy did not yet molest them, but pretended great civility; this did not last, for presently Colonel Walker felt someone stealthily raise the bottom of his scabbard so as to make his sword drop out, in which they succeeded, while at the same time two men got hold of his

legs and tried to pull him off his horse. He at once saw what they wanted and called out to his dragoons to gallop away and join us, and then followed himself as hard as he could, the enemy opening a sharp fire of artillery and jingalls upon them as they escaped, wounding two of the party. The enemy having thus thrown off the mask, we immediately attacked them, and after a two hours' fight drove them out of their position with a loss of 600 or 700 killed and wounded and 75 guns taken. The loss of the English was 19 wounded. On the 21st, the French being reinforced by 1800 men and 12 guns, we advanced beyond Zung-chow and fought the enemy within ten miles of Pekin. The country here is a vast plain of sand, covered with villages situated in the midst of small woods, in almost every one of which there was a Tartar camp. We drove them before us, burning their camps as we went, killing about 1200 of them and capturing 33 guns. The English loss this day was 2 killed and 29 wounded. We are now in camp about seven miles from Pekin, waiting for our infantry to come up and our heavy guns, to make an attack upon the capital, sure of success. In the meantime we are encamped on a fertile plain which gives us plentiful supplies and are altogether uncommonly well off, and the troops are in excellent health. Parkes,[47] with Mr. Loch [48] and de Norman of the Embassy, Mr. Bowlby, *Times* correspondent, Captain Brabazon, R.A., and Lieutenant Anderson, with Sikh cavalry and one dragoon, are prisoners in the enemy's hands by an act of treachery, and are, I believe, in Pekin. . . . The enemy sent in a flag of truce to Lord Elgin yesterday with a letter—they evidently wish to reopen negotiations. Lord Elgin has, I believe, refused to say anything to them until the prisoners are sent in. God bless you all, there is no time for more.—Ever your affectionate son,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

CAMP BEFORE PEKIN, *October* 9, 1860.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . Mr. Parkes, Loch, and some six of the prisoners were sent into camp yesterday evening, having been shamefully ill-treated. It appears that when they were so treacherously taken prisoners on the 18th of September, when passing through the enemy's camp, they were immediately taken before San-ko-lin-sin, the Commander-in-Chief, and there forced upon their knees, and their foreheads rubbed upon the ground, to do him homage. He abused them very much in strong terms, and ordered them to be made prisoners and sent back to Pekin at once. Their arms were pinioned, and they were conveyed in carts which went jogging along all over the rough roads to their considerable inconvenience, which was enhanced by the considerate feelings of some of the soldiers, who emptied into the carts bags of large nails like tenpenny nails, which in conjunction with the jolting of the vehicles produced the most soothing effects upon their posteriors. Arrived at Pekin, they were loaded with chains and sent to a common jail, where they were shut up with the lowest criminals without any food for three or four days but a few small cakes. Now and then Mandarins would come to cross-examine them, when they were invariably forced upon their knees and questioned in that manner, receiving frequent boxes on the ear when answers were given different from what they wished to hear, or when any of the prisoners did not answer from inability to speak Chinese. They were threatened with death in the event of our attempting to bombard the city, and though they were eventually better treated as we approached the city and the Chinese became more and more alarmed, still they passed a most painful and anxious time, daily expecting to be made away with. The prisoners, however, are not all sent in, some of them having been carried off to some distance from Pekin : amongst these are de Norman of

the Foreign Office, Bruce's attaché, Bowlby of the *Times*, Captain Brabazon, R.A., and Lieutenant Anderson of Fane's Horse, together with about 20 Sikhs. The fate of all these is uncertain, but we must hope for the best. Some of them have undoubtedly been killed, but who we do not yet know ; those that remain are to be given up to us as soon as they can be sent for. With regard to our own proceedings, the army arrived before the walls of Pekin on the 6th of October without meeting any more enemy ; they now fly before us in every direction whenever they get sight of even a single red coat, throwing away their arms and never allowing us to get near them. The formidable Tartar army has vanished, utterly panic-struck. To-day one of the gates of Pekin is to be given over to us which we shall hold until the new Treaty is made, which now will very soon be the case. The Emperor and all the chief Mandarins have fled from Pekin, but one of the latter is expected shortly to return and conduct negotiations. On Saturday the 6th we marched as far as the Emperor's Summer Palace, about three miles from Pekin, and such a collection of valuables as it contained I cannot describe. The rooms and halls of audience, which are floored with marble, and specially the Emperor's bedroom, were literally crammed with the most lovely knick-knacks you can conceive. Fancy having the run of Buckingham Palace and being allowed to take away anything and everything you liked, and armed moreover with a thick stick and a deep-rooted feeling of animosity to the owner, being able to indulge in the pleasure of smashing looking-glasses and porcelain, and knocking holes through pictures. Such a scene I witnessed yesterday, and if I had not been Adjutant-General of the Army might have walked off with such an amount of valuable plunder as would have satisfied the most greedy. Large magazines full of richly ornamented robes lined with costly furs, such as ermine and sable, were ruthlessly pulled from their shelves, and those that did not please the eye, thrown aside and trampled under foot. There

were other large storerooms full of fans, Mandarins' hats, and clothes of every description, others again piled up to the ceiling with rolls of silk, all embroidered, and to an incredible amount, more than you would find in the shops of five or six of the richest inhabitants of London put together. All these were plundered and pulled to pieces, floors were literally covered with fur robes, jade ornaments, porcelain, sweetmeats, and beautiful wood carvings too large to be carried away. If you and Julia could have been present, and had two large Exeter wagons at hand, you might have passed a most delightful morning, and enriched yourselves with all those beautiful things. Unfortunately for myself, it did not do to show too much greediness, and I had no means moreover of carrying things away. A grand sale is to take place to-morrow, and I will then try and get a few things to take home. We shall leave Pekin about the 25th of the month, and a portion or perhaps the whole of the force will winter at Tien-tsin. God bless you, my dear William.—Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

PEKIN, *October 27*, 1860.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have positively only a few minutes to write to you in, and I shall employ them by telling you simply that peace is at last signed . . . and that we leave Pekin in ten days' time for Tien-tsin, where the force will be broken up, excepting about 3000 men who will remain there till the spring; and as soon as the men can be embarked, which will be towards the end of November, I shall then go down to Hong Kong and await orders to return to England, which I expect to receive about the beginning of January, and then I shall start for home. We all attended the funeral the other day, which was conducted with great ceremony, of poor Mr. de Norman, Mr. Bowlby, Lieutenant Anderson, Indian Cavalry, and a private of

the King's Dragoon Guards. Out of 26 prisoners, 13 have returned, many mutilated more or less. The dead bodies of 12 have been sent back, and one, Captain Brabazon, R.A., remains unaccounted for, though there is no doubt that he was beheaded in Pekin on the 22nd of September. I am afraid you will think me a shabby fellow and a very undutiful son for sending home such a letter as this, but I know it will bring you intelligence that will make up for a little lack of news. God bless you, my dear mother. I long to be with you and tell you all about our doings of late,—the last two or three months have been the most interesting I have passed in my whole life; I would not have missed them for anything. Best love to all.—Ever your affectionate son, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

SHANGHAI, *December* 22, 1860.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . I cannot tell yet for certain when the General will let me go away. . . . At present the General with Lady Grant and his personal staff are at Japan, where they have gone at their own expense; he pressed me very hard to come with him, and I had much difficulty in remaining behind, but the idea of having to spend £300 upon a trip which can only last a very few days I did not consider myself justified in realising, so I am remaining at Shanghai until his return, living the life of a sybarite with a Mr. Webb, a partner in Dent's house at this place, who like Dent himself is one of the most hospitable men in the world, and who lives upon a princely scale such as you can have no idea of. The wealth of these merchant princes is untold, and they spend it like men—and good men too. . . .

HONG KONG, *February* 15, 1861.— . . . The Admiral started on his expedition up the Yang-tze-kiang on the

12th to establish the Consuls in the two new ports that are now opened by treaty in that river. A very interesting little expedition, of minor importance perhaps, but greater interest, accompanies him as far as Hankow, consisting of two of our officers, a medical man, a missionary as interpreter, and four Sikh soldiers. This party of eight then work their way up the Yang-tze as far as they can go, and strike across into Thibet, and so over the Himalayas to India. The journey will be a perilous one and take them some months to accomplish, but if they succeed and arrive in safety in Bengal, they will have done good public service in making known a route which has only been traversed by one European, Abbé Huc, and he draws the long bow so terribly that people were not generally over-confident in his statements. The opening of all the new ports guaranteed by the Treaty just signed will make such an immense increase to our trade that I think it will be more than the present mercantile houses can manage. Japan and Pekin will soon become as well known as Calcutta and Hong Kong, and the result must be a considerable increase to our revenue. The news from Japan just now, however, is not very satisfactory. The French and English Ministers have struck their flags at Jeddo and removed to Knagawa, to be near the shipping in case they should have to embark. There is sure to be a misunderstanding with the Taikoon, or rather the Daimios, before very long. . . .—Ever your affectionate brother,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Stephenson

HONG KONG, *February 27*, 1861.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I shall leave Hong Kong by the next mail, which starts on the 15th of March, and will bring me to England about the beginning of May. I shall go round by Southampton, and shall therefore drop in upon you at Hampton Court. I hope my plain clothes will be ready for me, for I shall not have

much in the way of dress with me. I shall send you a line when I reach Malta by the Marseilles route, and tell you when I am actually on my way. Thanks a thousand times for yours and my sisters' letters of the 26th December—the last I shall get. God bless you, my dear mother; one short fortnight after you receive this (or perhaps three weeks) and I shall be with you.

At Sea off Suez, *April* 16, 1861.—I send you a line as I promised, to let you know the probable day of my arrival. I am now in the Red Sea, and shall land at Suez to-morrow (April 17), start from Alexandria about the 19th, and hope to arrive at Southampton on the 2nd of May. The ship I am now in is the *Candia*, and I think the *Pera* will bring us from Alexandria, but am not quite sure.—Ever your affectionate son,

Fredk. Stephenson.

NOTES TO LETTERS FROM CHINA

[1] The captain of the *Transit.*

[2] His soldier servant.

[3] His sister, Isabella Stephenson.

[4] Kreli and Marcomo were rebel Kaffir chiefs.

[5] These must have been sun birds (*Nectarinia*), as there are no humming birds in Africa.

[6] Sugar birds (*Promerops Cafir*).

[7] General Simpson was Commander-in-Chief in the Crimea after Lord Raglan's death.

[8] Admiral of the Fleet Hon. Sir Henry Keppel, G.C.B., D.C.L., 1809–1904.

[9] The Kaffir War, 1860–1865.

[10] His youngest niece, now Mrs. Frank Pownall.

[11] The Indian Mutiny broke out in 1857 and was not finally quelled till 1859.

[12] James, 8th Earl of Elgin, K.T., G.C.B., 1811–1862. Governor-General of Canada. High Commissioner and Plenipotentiary on two special missions to the Emperor of China 1859–1862. Viceroy of India 1862.

[13] General Ashburnham commanded the British troops in China at that date.

[14] Sir Michael Seymour, 1802–1887, G.C.B., Admiral R.N. Commander-in-Chief of the East India Station and at Canton 1857. Son of Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, Bart., K.C.B., 1768–1834.

[15] Dr. Maltby, Bishop of Durham, was his godfather.

[16] Dr. M'Dougall, D.D., Bishop of Labuan, assisted Sir James Brook in his fight with the pirates at Sarawak, about 1847.

[17] Major Clifford was amongst other things a charming artist, and there is still carefully cherished a drawing of some Chinese children which he made, and which was given to the niece to whom the pigtail was promised—a promise that could not be kept.

[18] Chinese Commissioner Yeh, whose refusal to comply with the demand of Sir John Bowring, Governor of Hong Kong, for satisfaction when the Chinese-built boat *Arrow*, flying the British flag, had been boarded by a Chinese junk and the crew carried off on a charge of piracy, was the first step in the Chinese War of 1860.

[19] Hon. Sir Frederick William Augustus Bruce, G.C.B., 1814–1867, son of 7th Earl of Elgin. H.M.'s Agent and Consul-General in Egypt, British Envoy to the Emperor of China, and in 1865 British Envoy to the U.S.A.

[20] The travesty of the religion of Buddha, which was all that Sir Frederick saw while he was in China, made a lasting impression. He could not even recognise a germ of truth in it, and the temples and idols were nothing but objects of contempt.

[21] General Sir Charles van Straubenzee, G.C.B., b. 1812. Commanded the British troops in China 1857. Governor of Malta 1872–1878.

[22] Afterwards Mrs. Henry Wilson and Mrs. Hugh Freeling.

[23] Sir Charles John Canning, K.G., K.C.B., P.C., 1812–1862. Made Earl Canning 1859. Governor-General of India 1855.

[24] Baron Gros was the French Plenipotentiary.

[25] General Moncrieff, 1805–1869, Scots Fusilier Guards.

[26] Thomas Francis Wade, 1818–1895. Twice appointed to Lord Elgin's Chinese Commission. Minister Plenipotentiary at Pekin 1871. K.C.B. 1875.

[27] A jingall is a very long gun requiring a standing support, generally a tripod, but sometimes another man's shoulder.

[28] This drawing is still in the possession of the family.

[29] Lieutenant-Colonel H. Hope Crealock. Military Secretary to H.B.M.'s special embassy to China 1860.

[30] Susan Hamilton Stephenson, eldest daughter of Sir W. H. Stephenson, 1841–1899.

[31] Laurence Oliphant, 1829–1888. Writer and traveller, and ardent believer in the "spiritualism" of his day. Private secretary to Lord Elgin in America and China.

[32] Augustus Terrick Hamilton, 1818–1880, 71st Highland Light Infantry. Youngest son of W. R. Hamilton.

[33] The nurse in his brother's family.

[34] Albert Smith, 1816–1860. Writer and public entertainer. His "Mont Blanc" and "To China and Back" drew crowds to the Egyptian Halls in Piccadilly, where he gave illustrated lectures.

[35] Susan Stephenson became one of the best amateur pianists of her day.

[36] A Chinese dollar had been worth about 5s.

[37] Admiral Sir James Hope, b. 1808, G.C.B., principal Naval A.D.C. to Queen Victoria, etc. etc. Succeeded Sir Michael Seymour as Commander-in-Chief in China 1859, was wounded at the first unsuccessful attack on the Taku forts.

[38] War was declared between France and Austria in April 1859, and terminated June of the same year with the battles of Magenta and Solferino.

[39] His sister, Mrs. Melvil Wilson, lived in Versailles at that time.

[40] Dr. Maltby, Bishop of Durham.

[41] See Note 9 to Crimean Letters.

[42] Admiral Jones was second in command to Sir James Hope.

[43] Lady Stephenson's uncle, Rev. George Coxe, 1757–1844, Rector of St. Michael's, Winchester, brother of Archdeacon Coxe the historian. See "Romantic Story of Mrs. George Coxe" in Appendix.

[44] General de Montauban, Comte de Palikao, commanded the French forces in China at this time.

[45] Sir James Hope Grant of Kilgraston, G.C.B., 9th Lancers, 1808–1875. Served in the Chinese War of 1841–1842, when he greatly distinguished himself. Was present at Sobraon and throughout the second Sikh War. Distinguished himself during the final operations of the siege of Delhi, and marched to the relief of Lucknow 1857. Commander-in-Chief of British forces in China 1860.

[46] M. Bourboullon was French Plenipotentiary before Baron Gros.

[47] Harry Smith Parkes, 1828–1885, K.C.B., G.C.M.G. Sometime H.B.M. Minister to China and Japan. Accompanied Sir Hope Grant on the march to Pekin; taken prisoner by the Chinese and cruelly tortured.

[48] Rt. Hon. Henry Brougham Loch, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., 1827–1900. Created Baron Loch 1895. A.D.C. to Lord Gough in India; engaged in diplomatic services in Turkey and China. Governor of the Isle of Man, Victoria, and the Cape, and High Commissioner for South Africa.

LETTERS FROM EGYPT

PREFACE

June 19, 1914.

I HAVE received a request to write a few lines as an introduction to these letters of the late General Sir Frederick Stephenson to his family.

Having been on service with him in Egypt during the whole period of his command, and as Sirdar commanding the Egyptian Army associated with him in many of the scenes which he describes, I do so with pleasure, since the Egyptian Army owed to General Stephenson a deep debt of gratitude for his constant help during the early days of the force, and without the sympathy and assistance of the General Officer Commanding in Egypt the training and organisation of the army would have been greatly hampered.

The year 1883 was one of the most difficult in our occupation of Egypt. The Egyptian Army then being formed by Sir Evelyn Wood was not as yet efficient or properly organised, and he very rightly refused to allow it in its untrained state to be sent on service.

The Egyptian finances were still in disorder, and the satisfaction with which the terrified foreign element had received the protection afforded by the presence of a British garrison in Cairo had changed to a hostile and jealous attitude, promoted by the violent attacks on our administration by the French and native press.

The rapid spread of the cholera epidemic which appeared in the summer had checked all Lord Dufferin's schemes of reform—the disease raged from June to November; in the capital over 1000 deaths a day being

reached during the month of August, and panic occasioned by the great mortality caused a second exodus of the civil population, and the removal into camp of the British troops ; but the noble conduct of the Khedive, in returning to Cairo during the worst period of the cholera, gave confidence and support to the British Sanitary and Medical officers, and his influence minimised the native opposition to orders, given with a view to arresting the disease.

Two men whose presence in Egypt proved of permanent advantage arrived at this time—General Sir Frederick Stephenson and Sir Evelyn Baring, the former in May, the latter relieving Sir Edward Malet in September, and the outlook was never more threatening than at the close of the year 1883.

There could not have been a better appointment at this anxious time than that of the new Commander of the Forces. His calmness and good sense, shown in his dealing with the cholera epidemic, and his charming personality and courteous manner, did much to allay the prejudices of the Anglophobes of all nationalities, while Sir Evelyn Baring had been but a short time in Cairo when it was felt that a wise and strong man was at the head of Egyptian affairs.

Great anxiety had been felt in Cairo as to the fate of Hicks Pasha's expedition. It had been launched into the Desert, but week after week passed, and no news arrived till the 21st November, when the entire destruction of the force was reported.

In December an Egyptian force under Mahmoud Pasha was exterminated in an attempt to relieve Tokar ; and on the 2nd February 1884, Baker's force of 4000 men was cut to pieces, losing two-thirds of its numbers killed. At the same time all these various disasters were occurring, the question of the evacuation of Cairo was agitating the Home Government—it will be seen by General Stephenson's letter of the 19th November that he was even authorised to take up transport for the removal of troops, the proposal being

that Cairo should be evacuated, and that a small garrison for Egypt should be placed at Alexandria. The General most wisely pointed out the great danger of such a course, and eventually misfortunes and disasters were so multiplied that any reduction of troops became impossible. Sir Gerald Graham's victories at El Teb and Tamai, marked by heavy casualties to the British troops, being followed by retirement from Suakin, were useless, and brought no tranquillity to the Eastern Soudan.

Gordon's situation at Khartoum was becoming perilous, and it was evident, if he were to be rescued at all, it could only be by the dispatch of a British force ; but not until May were war preparations commenced in England. On the 10th of that month the military authorities in Cairo were ordered to purchase camels, and troops were to be held in readiness for a forward march in the autumn. Constant delays occurred, and it was not till the 5th of August that Mr. Gladstone moved for a Vote of Credit to enable the Government to organise operations for the relief of Gordon.

General Stephenson was on the spot : he had the advantage of conferring with Commander Hamill and other officers, who had for some weeks been examining the Cataracts on the Nile, and going into the question of facilities for passing them by boats and steamers. Naval opinion was strongly adverse to the Nile route, the highest naval authorities declaring the impossibility of boats such as had been proposed from London ascending the Cataract ; it was not unnatural, therefore, that with this expert opinion against the River route he should have been in favour of the Desert march by Suakin and Berber. Lord Wolseley, however, with the experience of the Red River Expedition, formed an opposite opinion, and his views were adopted by the Government. Lord Hartington's dispatch of the 26th August stated it would be unjust to ask General Stephenson to be responsible for directing an operation which, after full knowledge of the plan, he considered

impracticable: Lord Wolseley would command the expedition, but he hoped General Stephenson would remain in Egypt and give Lord Wolseley advice and assistance.

Without going into the question as to which of these routes was the right one, it is evident that naval opinion was wrong, since no great difficulties were found in passing through the Cataracts the whaler boats, and even the stern-wheel steamers; but at the same time, assuming that the route by Suakin was possible, the force must have arrived at Berber in much less time than Lord Wolseley's River route would have taken.

On the return of the Nile Expedition, Lord Wolseley having pointed out the necessity of dealing with Osman Digna, a force of 9000 men was collected and dispatched to Suakin. The Government by its dilatory measures had allowed the fall of Khartoum, and Gordon to be sacrificed. The unnecessary expedition to Suakin was no doubt caused by the necessity for doing something to satisfy the popular clamour.

After a short and unsatisfactory campaign, and the disaster of M'Neill's zariba, the Suakin-Berber project —to run a railway from Suakin to Berber—was given up, and again the policy of scuttle was carried out. The evacuation of the Eastern Soudan was now complete, though Suakin was still held.

During the whole period of the Nile Expedition Sir Frederick Stephenson remained in Cairo, giving all the support and assistance he possibly could to Lord Wolseley in carrying out the splendid attempt to relieve General Gordon.

After the return to England of Lord Wolseley, General Stephenson resumed his normal position as Commander in Egypt, but very soon the policy of retirement induced the Dervishes to organise an expedition for the invasion of the frontier.

In December 1887, a force under the well-known Dervish leader, Abd el Majid, appeared in front of our

fortified position at Koshey ; the small body of troops on the frontier (consisting of the Cameron Highlanders and two Egyptian battalions) was unable to repel the large force of the Dervishes, and a Soudanese battalion, and the Highlanders, were practically shut up in the fort at Koshey. Reinforcements were called for by Sir William Butler, and a small expedition was organised from Cairo and proceeded to Wady Halfa, and preparations were made to attack the Dervishes and to relieve the small garrison, which was almost surrounded.

When sufficient troops had been placed on the ground, General Stephenson arrived and took command of the force. It was a great joy to all of us to serve under him. On arrival he concurred in our arrangements made for the attack.

In order to get into the fort at Koshey, it was necessary in the early dawn to cross some open ground, under fire from the Dervishes, from a place known as the Black Rock, behind which a large number were always concealed. A boy had been killed at this place a few days before. I requested the General to pass as rapidly as possible, but he walked very slowly and quietly, and I was glad when we got him past in safety. The engagement was short, sharp, and decisive. The Dervishes were defeated with great loss, and driven back to the Province of Dongola, after which Sir Frederick returned to Cairo, much gratified by the success of his expedition.

In December 1887, the General's departure from Cairo, on the conclusion of his command, caused great regret to all, and was marked by numerous entertainments in his honour, which are described by him in his letters, all of which I feel sure will be read with interest by his many friends.

He had won the respect and affection not only of those under his command, both British and Egyptian, but also of the civil element, in the very mixed society in Egypt.

It is impossible in this brief record to convey in

any adequate manner the charming personality of the late General, but his gentle courtesy of manner, his devotion to the service of others, will never be forgotten by those who knew him, and he will be remembered as a distinguished soldier, a good man, an unselfish and devoted friend. His sympathy with those much younger than himself kept him in touch with many officers still serving, and he lived in the hearts of men of all ages.

The last time I visited him—not long before his death—he was busy reading, and enjoying, Napier's *Peninsular War*, his mind as clear, his interest as keen as ever; and when death came, those who knew him, and loved him, felt that one of the last of the fine old soldiers of the Early Victorian days was gone—a type of all that was good and noble—a perfect English Gentleman.

GRENFELL, F.M.

EGYPT—1883-1887

To his Sister, Mrs. Henry Giffard

ALEXANDRIA, *May* 24, 1883.

MY DEAR ELLA,—Just one hurried line to say that I have arrived here, and go on to Cairo this afternoon. An unexpected chance arises for sending this at once, for the mail which should have left before our arrival has been detained by quarantine at Suez in consequence of cholera having broken out at Bombay. The journey and voyage have been most pleasant, weather lovely and no heat, and everything most enjoyable. I never was better, and trust that this state of things may continue. You shall hear more fully by next mail, at present I dare not write more for fear of missing the mail.—Ever yours affectionately, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Sister, Henrietta Maria Stephenson

CAIRO, *May* 25, 1883.

MY DEAR MINNIE,—I sent Ella a few hurried lines yesterday as I was on the point of disembarking. As we entered the harbour the band on board the Khedive's yacht struck up "God save the Queen," and an Egyptian frigate dipped her colours, an honour I thought intended for the Queen, it being her birthday; but later I ascertained that it was intended for the new General in Command. Shortly after, General Earle commanding in Alexandria came on board, and then followed the Egyptian Governor of the town; shortly after a kind of state barge came alongside, in which I started for the shore, the men-of-war in the harbour, English and

foreign, firing the customary salutes, and the Khedive's band playing as before. On landing there were two guards of honour drawn up, an English and an Egyptian one, and the military heads of departments waiting to be introduced. The Governor's carriage then drove off with him and myself, with a cavalry escort, through the town, where the people turned out in pretty good numbers and saluted as we passed. We drove to General Earle's house, and before going to luncheon I went out by train to Ramleh, went over the hospital and barracks, and had a good look at the surrounding country, the scene of some of the early fighting last year. After luncheon the Governor called for me and drove me in his carriage to the station. We had a long journey to Cairo; we took six hours to do about 100 miles. I did not grudge the time, for I amused myself in looking at the country and its cultivation. I need scarcely tell you that the Delta is as level as possible; the crops were well forward, and here and there barley had been already cut—altogether the Delta was pretty much what I had expected to find it. On arrival there was another guard of honour with head officials. All this ceremony, which would not take place to the same extent in many other commands, is of consequence here, where the people attach so much importance to ceremony, and would think very little of the General in command if a little fuss were not made about him. I got to my house about 8.30—a small palace beautifully fitted up and furnished throughout with every possible luxury and comfort, including (which I was not quite sure of) linen and plate in abundance. The Khedive has been most liberal in providing this house, and no expense has been spared. It is a square house, surrounded by a small but well-filled garden, with the best stables I think I have ever seen. On the ground floor is a reception room which I have not yet used, out of which is a smaller sort of drawing-room, and out of that again, all *en suite*, an extremely good-sized dining-room. The rooms are all connected outside

by a large, spacious verandah, glazed, which runs along that part of the house. Then there are on the same floor the two A.D.C.'s rooms, and a sitting-room for them, the staircase very handsomely carpeted ; there is also a bathroom. Upstairs the arrangements are better still ; my own suite of rooms consists of a charming bedroom and dressing-room on one side, with a good marble bath ; on the other side a good-sized room, a large boudoir, in which I am now writing ; leading out of it are two drawing-rooms, and a bed- and dressing-room for the military secretary, and there are two other spare bedrooms. In short, the whole arrangement is, I assure you, quite princely. For all this I have no expense to meet beyond paying, at moderate wages, two Egyptian male housemaids, and the gentleman, also a native, who cuts the grass by small handfuls as if he were cutting hair ; the washing of the house linen of course I have to pay for. The A.D.C. who manages the household will bring, I think, my monthly bills within reasonable compass, and I think I shall make the two ends meet quite comfortably ; but I shall have to entertain a good deal, especially in the winter.

June 4, 1883.— . . . I am getting on capitally, and like this place very much. I have an admirable force under my command, nothing can be better, a remarkably fine set of men whose conduct is excellent ; they are very healthy, and the number of sick is very small. Then the society is very pleasant, both foreign and native. Some of the Pashas are married *à l'Européenne*, and one Nubar, a great friend of Rivers', whom I dined with the other night, is an Armenian, and so is his wife ; they are wealthy people and gave us an excellent dinner. The visits I have had to pay here have been numerous ; the Khedive was almost the first I went to see. Then I called upon a cousin of his, Princess Nazli, a very attractive, clever, and agreeable young widow, who talks English as well as I do. Cigarettes and coffee are always produced at visits and are often enjoyed by the

ladies as much as by the men. Pasha Hussein, a brother of the Khedive, is another of the family I have had to visit—a man of about twenty-eight or thirty, good looking, intelligent, and well dressed. He lives in a charming house on the other side of the Nile, on the road to the Pyramids, with an extremely pretty garden attached, laid out with good taste, and with many beautiful exotics. But close at hand is another garden of greater celebrity, belonging to the Khedive, upon which have been spent fabulous sums by the late Khedive, Ismail, who seems to have done his utmost to ruin Egypt by his reckless extravagance. However, I must say this, that a more beautiful garden it is difficult to imagine. I am told it cost millions. The heat is beginning to make itself felt, but up to now I do not think it is as great or as oppressive as in China; but then Canton and Hong Kong, where I mostly was, were just upon the tropics,—one just within, the other just without,—whereas Cairo is some 7 or 8 degrees more north. Then the character of the atmosphere there was moist, and the same by night as by day, whereas here it is dry, and one can always be sure of a good night's rest. Now and then a hot wind blows from the desert and makes the air very oppressive. I have not yet seen any of the numerous interesting sights (having had my time fully occupied), beyond riding through the Arab quarters and going up to the Citadel, which is historically interesting from many points of view. It contains a solid, well-built stone fortress, built by Saladin, and there is one square where Mahomet Ali massacred the Mamelukes, and the corner of a wall is shown where a solitary Mameluke is supposed to have escaped. It is almost too hot to go about sight-seeing with any comfort, and I shall probably have to put off this pleasure till the autumn or winter. The Pyramids of Gizeh are only some eight miles off, and I must manage to get there before long. Two men whom I met at dinner last night were to have ridden out there early this morning to be there in time for sun rising. One of the two was Mr. Donovan,

who was shut up in Merv some two years ago, and whose book was a good deal read lately. He is accompanied by a Mr. Power, an artist for one of the weekly illustrated papers; in about a week they go to the Soudan and Khartoum, at the junction of the Blue and the White Niles, travelling by Suakin, about half-way down the Red Sea, and then crossing to Berber on the Nile.

CAIRO, *June* 9, 1883.—The heat here is beginning in earnest; the nights and mornings are comparatively cool, and that is a great point. . . . I have been dining out a great deal lately, and to-night give my first dinner in return. Next week I give two more, and after that I shall hope for a little quiet, which will be acceptable this hot weather. People are leaving Cairo very fast to escape the summer heat; some go to Ramleh for the cool sea breezes, but the majority go to Europe. The Khedive has just left for the Ras-el-Zin Palace in Alexandria, and in a few days this place will be half deserted. The great place for carriages and promeneurs, the Rotten Row of Cairo, is a road called the Shoolton Road, about four miles long, well planted with trees, leading from the Khedive's many palaces. It is well watered, and is a pleasant drive, but yesterday it was almost empty; in about three months people will be all back again, and then we shall be lively enough. I am looking forward to our next full moon for an excursion to the Pyramids; it is too hot to go there now until late in the afternoon, so that a good moon is necessary to give you time for a good view of them. The Tombs of the Caliphs are just outside the town, and I shall go to see them in the course of the next few days, and then make a round of the mosques, which, I am told, are worth seeing. The bazaar is, I think, not equal to the one in Constantinople, except perhaps as regards the extent to which you can be robbed there, but it has all the Oriental characteristics and is most picturesque.

CAIRO, *June* 19.—I paid yesterday my first visit to the Gizeh Pyramids. We went a small party, consisting of General Valentine Baker, now Baker Pasha, head of the Egyptian Constabulary, his wife and pretty daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Rowsell (he administers the domain lands), and the staff from here, besides General Dormer, who is chief of the staff. We left here at 4.30, which is as early as the heat will allow, and arrived in an hour and a half, a distance of about 8 miles, along a fairly good road raised about 6 or 7 feet above the surrounding plain, and planted with an avenue of trees—a very different route from the old donkey track which formerly existed. The Pyramids are situated upon rocky ground at the extreme verge of the Desert, within a few hundred yards of where cultivation ceases. The surroundings of the Pyramids are one vast necropolis, and there can be little doubt but that if the ground were carefully explored, a large number of tombs would be discovered. There is more to see than I expected. The vastness of the great Pyramid, for I had not time to explore more than one, is not easy to realise, but I think at last that I succeeded in doing so, and appreciated what a stupendous work it is, and what unparalleled labour and exquisite construction are shown in the building. Its vertical height is 50 or 60 feet greater than that of St. Paul's; the casing has been entirely removed, and instead of each side presenting, as it formerly did, one uniformly smooth surface from base to apex, a gradation of the different courses of huge blocks of stone, rising in steps, is exposed to view. This smooth covering is, however, visible in the adjoining Pyramid, the upper portion of which remains still undisturbed. I went a short way up the outside, sufficiently so to satisfy me that there was nothing to be gained in going higher; the interior I have left for my next visit. The Sphinx is within 300 or 400 yards, cut out of the solid rock, the head much mutilated, exactly as one has seen it represented, much of the original dark red paint still visible with which it was decorated thousands of years ago.

The remainder of the rock forming the body is exposed to view as regards the upper surface, but it is so worn away and honey-combed as to leave but little of the original outline; the remainder of the animal, which is couchant, lies embedded in the sand. It was uncovered, I understand, a few years ago, but has since been buried again in the sand. There is a temple close by of red polished granite half buried in the sand, which astonished me as much as the Pyramid, so enormous are the blocks of which it is built; the smooth polish is perfect and equals anything of the kind of the present day. The manner in which these blocks are hewn is really marvellous—such skill, such labour, such patience, fitting each other with wonderful exactness, and so close as hardly to admit anywhere of the blade of a small knife. The whole surface of the walls is of uniform smoothness throughout—a perfect plane; the same with the massive square monoliths intended to support the roof, all in their places, perfectly upright. This granite has been quarried up the Nile some 200 or 300 miles away; the mechanical power that got these blocks where they are now is a mystery. We returned by a bright moonlight, having encountered a slight dust-storm, and passing *en route* a camel battery of artillery of the Khedive's army—the guns in line, then the line of camels lying down, and the men regaling themselves with a sheep just slaughtered, and some melons. We got back about nine o'clock to a cold dinner, which was very enjoyable. So much for my present experiences of Egyptian sight-seeing. I hope I haven't bored you, for the subject is a pretty stale one, and I think I have sent you enough for the present. With love to you all.—Ever yours affectionately,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Sister

CAIRO, *July* 2, 1883.

MY DEAR MINNIE,— . . . We are all well and flourishing, and as regards myself I have not felt so

well for many a long time . . . this climate suits me in many respects particularly well. . . . I must, however, except Kimber from this favourable account ; he has knocked up and cannot stand the climate, and I shall have to send him home. . . . I spent a few pleasant days at Alexandria last week, when I went to pay my respects to the Khedive, on the anniversary of his accession. He must have been gratified at the large attendance at his reception. The Greeks there were in a most disgraceful panic at the news that cholera had made its appearance at Damietta, some 70 miles off, and were leaving the town by hundreds, setting the worst possible example to the natives. We are in great hopes that the disease will remain confined to Damietta, or chiefly so, but we are taking here all reasonable precautions.—Ever yours affectionately,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Niece, Mrs. Frank Pownall

CAIRO, *July* 17, 1883.

MY DEAR HELEN,—It is time, I think, that I should inquire how you are getting on and give you at the same time some news about this place and the life we lead. In the first place, I hope that you and Frank are well, and that the world is going on well with you both, as well as with Mr. Pownall. I suppose that Frank is fully employed, and Mr. Pownall taking advantage of the fine weather, which I hear you have been having lately, to pay some country visits. I have not forgotten his coming to see me off with Frank, and fully appreciated such a friendly act ; it seems a very long time since then, though only two months, but that is always the case, I think, when living in a new country with plenty of occupation. [*Here a flattened mosquito.*] This mutilated carcase represents one occupation—if not the principal ; the brute settled on my hand while I was writing and did all he could to distract my thoughts, but you will be glad to know that I used

no bad language on the occasion; I am afraid that vocabulary has been long exhausted.

The Nile is now beginning to show a rise of about two feet, and many people expect that the inundations, which will commence, I believe, in another two or three weeks, will be instrumental in driving away the cholera by flushing the country and removing impurities. I hope this may be the case, for the poor fellaheen have suffered pretty well already—the number of deaths recorded up to now is about 3000. It has now reached Cairo, as you will have seen, but hitherto the sufferers have belonged to the poorer classes, amongst whom bad food and uncleanly habits have seriously contributed to keep the disease alive; my great anxiety is, of course, to keep the troops free, and I am in great hopes that we shall succeed. The weather has been too hot lately to enable me to go far from Cairo and visit the tombs of Upper Egypt and the Pyramids, and excepting those at Gizeh I have seen none except at a distance. [*Another flattened mosquito.*] (This will give you an idea of the frightful interruption I am subject to.) These distant ones, which can be seen from here, are at Sakhara, about 10 or 12 miles off, and, with the tombs, are in some respects more interesting than those of Gizeh, which, although the finest in Egypt as regards elevation, proportion, and the wonderful construction of the inner chambers and galleries, are devoid of all hieroglyphics and paintings, which are to be found in marvellous preservation in Sakhara; it is very tempting to see those distant pyramids and to be obliged to postpone visiting them till cooler weather sets in. I thought a great deal of Mr. Pownall on visiting the Sphinx, which looks like the battered head of a prize-fighter; the wig, however, is almost untouched, and the features are sufficiently distinct to enable you to trace their Nubian origin, and much of the red paint which formerly covered it is still visible. The outline of the couchant figure is perfectly clear and rises some six feet or more above the sand which buries the remainder; its sides [*another mosquito*],

as far as can be seen, are much honeycombed. The whole figure was exposed to view after much labour some years ago, and disclosed an altar between the animal's fore-paws ; it was, however, impossible to keep it clear from the drifting sand for any length of time, and it is covered up to the extent now seen. There is a watering-place with sulphur baths on the edge of the Desert immediately opposite Sakhara, where there is a good hotel, to which self and staff go sometimes on Sundays for a little change ; with this exception and visits to Gizeh and the Barrage, at the point of separation of the Rosetta and Damietta branches [*of the Nile*], my explorations have been limited to the town, where I wander about from 5.30 to 7, or between the same hours at evening. There is plenty to amuse and interest me in the bazaar, the mosques, and especially the Coptic churches in old Cairo, which are of very great age, probably seventh or eighth century ; underneath one of these is a curious little crypt, quite dark, consisting of nave, aisles, and altar, the roof being supported by eight little marble monolith pillars. There are three recesses connected with an absurd tradition implicitly believed in, that these were occupied respectively by our Saviour, the Virgin, and Joseph. In another church there is some beautiful carved and inlaid work of different kinds of wood, mixed with ivory, of really exquisite design and execution ; and in other kinds of inlaid work known as Opus Alexandrinum there is a happy mixture of marbles and mother-of-pearl, which I have never seen before, which is particularly pleasing in effect, and though incongruous perhaps in material is by no means so in colour ; the mother-of-pearl catches the light and gives life and warmth to the whole work. Talking of traditions, I drove to the site of another absurd one, some 4 or 5 miles outside the other extremity of the town—the Virgin's Tree, a wild fig tree, probably 300 years old, under which the Holy Family are supposed to have reposed. But about another mile farther north is a really interesting monument, a pyramid [? *obelisk*], said to be the oldest in Egypt, and

it looks like it from the simplicity of the hieroglyphics ; it stands alone in the midst of the ruins of Heliopolis, now nothing but heaps of rubbish. Heliopolis is "On" of the Scriptures, in former days an establishment of priests upon a very large scale. This pyramid [? *obelisk*], of red granite, brought all the way from Assouan (Syene), the southern boundary of Upper Egypt, is about 60 feet high, a monolith, of course, some 5½ feet of which are, I believe, buried in the sand, is as erect as when first placed there, and its angles are as sharp (except where mischievously chipped away low down) and its surfaces as smooth as possible ; the same may be said of the hieroglyphics which in many instances are rendered more visible still by the wild bees, which have nested in the incisions, neatly filling them up, and from their colour making the characters, which they have adopted as their home, very conspicuous.

I have no doubt that long before you have got as far as this you will have been wishing General Dryasdust at the bottom of the Red Sea, so conveniently situated for the purpose ; I won't therefore bore you any more with what looks very like quotations from Murray. It is Mr. Pownall who has set me going in consequence of a remark he made about digging out the Sphinx, and so from one subject to another my thoughts have been wandering about in this reckless manner.

And now I will finish by relating a curious *fact* which you will not believe, showing a wonderful contrast between the slowness of Egyptian officialism in this country, and the wonderful rapidity of electric communication. On Sunday last it was known to us that five deaths from cholera had occurred at Gizeh, a village about two miles off, on the previous night. On the Monday following, that is the next day, recollect, Sir E. Malet[1] receives a message from the Queen, through Ponsonby, about eight o'clock in the morning, expressing her regret at the appearance of cholera so near Cairo, and her hope that her troops, as well as other persons,

were being well looked after. This was the first intimation which Malet had received that cholera had broken out at Gizeh, two miles from Cairo, within the last thirty-six hours. I must tell you another story which has just come into my head, and which was told me with great naïveté the other evening by a young officer of a Highland regiment, whose expressions of horror at what he was relating amused me more than the incident itself. Some months back the officers of this regiment wished to give their men a day's amusement, and marched them to the Gizeh Pyramids ; when there the men naturally wished to scramble up to the top, so away they went, some 500 or 600 of them in their kilts, to see who could get to the top first. There is an hotel close to the foot of the chief pyramid, and when the officers went there, after the return of the men, they found three French ladies ensconced in one of the windows, who had been watching the whole proceedings with the liveliest interest. A good subject for a cartoon. . . . With love to Frank and kind remembrances to Mr. Pownall.—Ever yours affectionately,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

People here are asking if Rivers [2] is coming out to replace Sir A. Colvin ;[3] my reply is, " Certainly not." I believe I am right.

I hope my mutilated victims will reach you safely.

To his Sister

CAIRO, *August* 17, 1883.

MY DEAR MINNIE,— . . . Our troubles here, though not quite over, are drawing to a close ; we still have a few isolated cases [*of cholera*], and I shall not feel quite happy until they have ceased entirely. In the meantime men and horses are exposed, especially the latter, who have no protection whatever except rugs over their backs and loins, to the heat of the

Desert, and I fear that when we bring them in much sickness will break out. The heat there is very great, and although there is plenty of air, it brings with it sometimes clouds of sand which is unpleasant. We are now busy in cleaning, disinfecting, and whitewashing all our barracks and hospitals, to be ready for the return of the troops, which, if all things go on favourably, will take place about the end of this month. The Nile is now rising and is a splendid river from a quarter to half a mile in breadth, running from about 4 to 5 miles an hour, turned of a chocolate colour, and heavily charged with alluvium from the Abyssinian Mountains, of great fertilising value. One may fairly consider the Nile as the most important and thoroughly useful river in the world. For, besides its capabilities for navigation, the existence of the entire country is absolutely dependent upon it for irrigation and fertilisation, and without it the whole country would become a vast desert without a single inhabitant upon it. The old land of Goshen, for instance, upon which the late campaign took place, and where the battle of Tel-el-Kebir [4] was fought, has mostly relapsed into desert owing to discontinued irrigation. The books you gave me about Egypt are highly prized—*Harda* and *Homo Sum*. I have since got another—*The Egyptian Princess*, well worth your reading. The author, Ebers, is a good authority upon Egyptian matters, a good archæologist. The heat continues very great and will so last, I am told, until the middle of October, by which time I suppose I shall have pretty well melted away. And now good-bye, my dear Minnie; let me know of all your goings on.

CAIRO, *August* 27, 1883.— . . . The cholera is leaving us, but still clings to one of our battalions and one of the hospitals, and though the cases are isolated ones yet they prevent me bringing the troops back to barracks as soon as I should wish. I suppose I must exercise a little patience. There was a great function

here to-day in starting a pilgrimage for Mecca, an annual affair to celebrate which the whole city turns out, and the Khedive and all the Ministers are present, together with all the troops that can be got together. The assemblage of the people was an uncommonly pretty sight, the colour of the dresses is so varied and so very picturesque. The origin of the ceremony is of very ancient date, when the favourite wife of one of the Caliphs was desirous of going on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and a large and richly ornamented howdah was constructed beneath which she travelled, concealed from the vulgar gaze, on the back of a camel. The pilgrimage lasted nearly four weeks. Ever since her death a howdah similar to the one then used is paraded in great state and sent annually to Mecca ; with it goes a new carpet to be placed at the Prophet's tomb, the old one it replaces being torn up into small pieces and distributed amongst the Faithful. The collection of camels, Dervishes, standard-bearers, and tom-toms is not easy to describe ; but it was a pretty sight, a curious one—and intensely silly. I cannot make out what the Government intends doing with regard to keeping the troops out here. They will commit an act of indescribable folly if they withdraw them from Cairo, or even sensibly reduce them in numbers. The Egyptian Government requires support and the commercial community requires to feel secure, and this I am confident the English troops alone can give, and if they are withdrawn, mistrust, intrigues, and disaffection will soon become rife. My new A.D.C. arrived out here all right. I am very glad to have him. He is agreeable, intelligent, and a capital soldier, and will do very well. . . .—Yours ever affectionately, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

CAIRO, *October* 8, 1883.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . I passed last Saturday one of the pleasantest and most interesting days I have

ever spent in my life. Cook, the tourist, placed a steamer at my disposal to enable me to visit the Pyramids of Sakhara, which are about 15 miles up the Nile on its left bank, and 5 or 6 miles inland. The Nile is now at full flood, a noble river, nearly, I should say, if not quite half a mile broad, the country on each side quite low and flat for a distance, each side varying from 3 to 5 miles, where a low range of hills borders the landscape, the Arabian (so-called) on the right bank, the Lybian on the left; the intermediate land forms the valley of the Nile, beyond which on both sides there is nothing but desert. The vegetation along the shore, including masses of date trees which are very beautiful owing to their ripe, richly coloured fruit, and the exquisite colouring of this country, made our three hours' voyage a very pleasant one, though our progress was slow against a current of four or five miles an hour. On landing, we found donkeys ready for us; our road lay through the ruins of Memphis, and along a dyke with inundated land like a large sea on each side. I am not going to bore you with an account of the Pyramids and Tombs of Sakhara; they are of surpassing interest and beyond the powers of adequate description. . . . I look upon it quite as a settled thing that the English army will evacuate Cairo some time in the course of this winter, that a Brigade of about three battalions and perhaps two batteries of artillery, etc., will remain in occupation of Alexandria, and that the rest of the force will be sent home. I shall probably be retained in Egypt. I think this is what will happen, and in probably a month's time it will all be settled. Whether this will be wise policy or not remains to be seen,—my own opinion is that the withdrawal of our troops from Cairo is premature, and that we should remain until the administrative measures now in progress have made a greater advance; the new policy requires support which I think we are withdrawing too soon; the constabulary is not yet formed, and the loyalty of the Egyptian army has not been sufficiently tested.

Things may, and probably will go right, but there is an uncertainty about the immediate future which we ought not to incur. On the other hand, our presence in Egypt costs the Khedive upwards of £300,000 a year, and it will be a great thing for him to reduce this charge by one-half. Then, again, he and his Government wish, naturally enough, to be left a little more to themselves, and our own Government pretend that by this withdrawal of our troops they are carrying out their pledge ; but this construction of their policy will bear, I think, another interpretation, for the declaration they made was to the effect that they would withdraw when reforms had made sufficient progress to justify their doing so ; but at present this progress is slight, it is mostly commencing, and is far from being consolidated. We must be careful that this country does not lapse into its former condition, or that by diminishing our influence in Cairo we open the door to the intrigues of some other country. Vincent,[5] the new Financier, is expected here in fourteen days—six months ago he was a subaltern in the Guards. He is a clever fellow, but his youth and inexperience have put up the backs of some other hands out here who will have to serve under him.—Yours affectionately,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Sister

CAIRO, *October* 15, 1883.

MY DEAR MINNIE,— . . . We shall all be glad at Cairo to know what is intended to be done with us. In the meantime it looks very much as if troubles would break out elsewhere, for France is doing all she can to create them, and is insulting one nation after another ; things cannot go on in this way much longer without an outbreak, and it seems highly probable that this will take place in France itself, where another revolution may take place any day ; their Government is discredited everywhere, and has no hold upon the people. Fancy if one is sent on to China again ! it is

quite upon the cards. Partly in anticipation of being suddenly moved from Cairo, I have thought it as well to see as much of this neighbourhood as I could beforehand, and made a most interesting excursion to a spot in the Desert called Sakhara. . . . An excursion up the Nile as far as the First Cataract is what I now long to see, if I can manage to do so before leaving. . . . —Ever yours affectionately,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

CAIRO, *October* 15, 1883.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—Thanks very much for your letter of the 4th, it contained indeed a budget of sad news. Poor Mrs. Freeling's [6] death, much as I regret her loss, was in the due course of nature and was an event which we have all probably been looking to, and when so faultless a life as hers (at all events in our eyes) has closed at last, it is only what has been long expected, and regrets are softened by the manner in which she has accomplished her task in this life. But the news of Bob Hamilton's [7] death is a more unexpected one, which I hardly realise yet ; his is indeed an irreparable loss, not only to all his numerous friends, with whom he was so justly popular, but to his own immediate surroundings, by whom he will be sadly missed. . . . There has been no man, I am sure, to whose account more kind acts can be laid than to his, and I doubt if he ever entertained a real unkindly feeling to anyone. We shall all have none but pleasant recollections of him. Since I last wrote I feel pretty sure that the removal of our troops from Cairo is in the immediate future. . . . I should not be surprised, however, if I were retained in the country. . . . My future position will hardly be one suited to a Lieutenant-General, but here I am, and if it is desired for certain reasons still to retain an officer of that rank out here I do not see how I can object. The chief reason, indeed the only one

for doing so, would be to have in the country a General of higher rank than Evelyn Wood ;[8] but I shall know more of what is intended, I hope, in the course of two or three weeks. I look upon this diminution of our force and our removal from Cairo, especially if followed as I believe it will be by our speedy withdrawal altogether, as a most unwise measure. It is premature, and Baring[9] himself, who advocates it very decidedly, spoke of it to me as if he felt that we were incurring a risk and that he had misgivings on the subject ; for he used the expression, " We must take the plunge." Now I don't think that that is the way in which the English Government should carry out its measures—viz., with a feeling of mistrust as to their consequences. Here we are, with a firm hold upon the country, which it is of vital importance to us to maintain. Why risk it, especially at a time when French restlessness is rampant all over the world, and will find after our departure a clear field for its exercise? Reforms have made but little progress, the army is not nearly formed and it is early yet to test its loyalty ; the constabulary, too, is still incomplete, and the officers in charge of it look forward with strong misgivings to our departure. The European residents here are in great alarm at the prospect before them, and many of them declare that they will leave when we do. Nubar Pasha[10] and his family, who are now absent, do not intend returning this winter, and that is not a good sign. The Government at home pretend that in removing our troops they are acting up to their pledge ; I maintain, on the contrary, that by doing so prematurely they are acting contrary to their pledge, which was, if not in so many words, at least in spirit, to retain hold of this country until it was able to govern itself: no one can say that of Egypt yet. The other consideration is to relieve the financial pressure we put upon Egypt by the capitation rate of £4 per man per month, which she is bound to pay to England, amounting to upwards of £300,000 a year. We ought, I think, to relieve Egypt

of this charge and pay it ourselves. In whose interest are we here, if not in our own ? and surely we ought to pay for the advantages we derive from our occupation. You must not think me a croaker ; I don't say all these things I have been hinting at will come to pass, but there is a risk and we have no right to incur it.

CAIRO, *November* 19.— . . . Our Government don't now seem to be in any great hurry for getting us out of Cairo ; at first they were very anxious to get us out of here as quickly as possible. Sir Charles Dilke's [11] speech just before the end of the session, fully endorsed by Mr. Gladstone, was very decided upon this point. . . . Baring offered a month ago to authorise me to take up freight at once, so as to get us away quickly, and the War Office telegraphed to know in how short a time I should be ready to quarter the new garrison at Alexandria. We now learn that one single ship has been told off, the *Himalaya*, for bringing the infantry away, and to do this she is to make three trips : as she does not leave England upon her voyage until the 29th of this month, it will be about the middle of the month of February before Cairo is evacuated. Then as regards the withdrawal from Egypt altogether, the wives and children of the troops to remain at Alexandria are now ordered out. I have told the Secretary for War that I could not provide huts for so many families under £10,000. This rather startled him, but yesterday I received instructions to go on with the work—this looks like a prolonged occupation. Yesterday my pulse was being felt with the view of ascertaining whether I would like to keep my headquarters at Cairo after the troops had left for Alexandria. I replied that such a measure, so far as the command of the troops was concerned, would be an absurdity, but there was an idea that the effect politically would be good ; this is a very different notion from what prevailed a short time age—in Baring's mind, at all events. There is no doubt that the French will do all they can to regain

their lost influence, and we must be on the alert if we are to prevent them. There has been bad news from Suakin, where Moncrieff's [12] brother [13] was consul; he has been killed, as you will have heard by this time, by an onslaught from the slave dealers in the Soudan, who, from what is reported here, routed a body of about 500 Egyptian troops, of whom only 14 are said to have escaped. How poor Moncrieff was mixed up in the affray has not yet been sufficiently explained. This is a serious matter, unless Hicks,[14] by a very decided success at Obeid, can counteract the effects of this reverse; it is the second loss of this nature which the Egyptian troops have suffered in this neighbourhood between Suakin and Berber within six weeks or two months. The campaign in the Soudan has been for a long time a constant heavy drain upon the finances of this country, and the present state of things ought to be put a stop to. Hicks may possibly succeed in doing this, but if he does not, the Egyptian army should be employed for the purpose, and an English governor appointed for the time at Khartoum, or else an English official at the elbow of the Egyptian governor to control him. I don't imagine our own Government will take serious notice of Moncrieff's death, though under other circumstances any other country would be called to account for their want of protection to a foreign consul. Affairs in China look very bad, and war with France is, I suppose, now inevitable. Two serious complications may arise, either of which may bring us into the fray; first, an indiscriminate attack by the Chinese populace upon all Europeans alike, and secondly, the blockade of the Chinese ports by the French and a possible repetition of outrages upon British subjects *à la Pièrre*.[15] . . . I had to give a ball here the other day, which went off fairly well. The different Pashas came, Ministers and all, and got the head interpreter to take them upstairs by twos and threes to see the house—but really to have a turn at the champagne on the sly. A fat old Sheikh of high religious

celebrity followed their example, but wishing to avoid the notice of the other Pashas, as well as of the company generally, was taken by the interpreter into my dressing-room, where he indulged in a quiet and copious draught.—
Yours affectionately, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Sister

CAIRO, *November* 18, 1883.

MY DEAR MINNY,— . . . I spent two days at Alexandria this week making preparations for putting up the additional troops which will have to go there, and looking out for quarters for myself. I shall occupy those where General Earle [16] is now living, a nice suite of rooms on a flat which will take in myself and one A.D.C., having a spare room for visitors ; the other A.D.C. and military secretary will have to live in lodgings. The house I am now in here is, of course, a far better one, but it is, if anything, too much so, and entails expense. Thinking I was on the point of leaving I gave a ball the other night, which went off fairly well, but has left my pocket in rather an exhausted condition, but I am obliged to entertain here a good deal, the position to be kept up being a prominent one, which has to be acted up to. At Alexandria there will not be so much. I want Ella's helping hand here sadly to regulate household expenses, having neither time nor experience to go into those matters myself, and although I have to leave them to the care of a very clever A.D.C., still a certain amount of robbery goes on which it is extremely difficult to prevent. Lady Strangford,[17] amongst other arrivals, has lately come out to this part of the world to look after a hospital which she has established at Cairo, and to superintend another at Port Said ; she is an active, energetic woman, who devotes herself to this work. There are very few other visitors ; indeed Cairo will be very empty this winter, the cholera and the discomforts of a lengthened quarantine for those returning home overland will keep people away. Alexandria cannot

quite shake itself clear of the cholera, and that frightens people at a distance; there are still one or two fatal cases there daily. I poke about the Pyramids at Gizeh, and the tombs at Sakhara, whenever I have a chance, and store up pleasant and interesting recollections. I don't, however, see my way just yet to going to the Upper Nile. I am afraid I shall not be able to get away while the movement of the troops is taking place, though I should much like to make the trip before going away from Cairo. Colonel Romilly whose son is one of my A.D.C.'s, is coming to stay with me next week with his wife and daughter; they will afterwards go up the Nile, and I should be glad if I could go with them. The Khedive has intimated a wish to give us an entertainment of some kind before we leave, and I have promised to let him know when the time will arrive for his doing so, which now will not be so soon as we thought. . . . I have taken to the *Arabian Nights* lately, never having read them very thoroughly, and as Cairo is the scene of some of the stories, and as the habits, dress, and manners of the people are probably exactly as they were when the stories were written, now is a good opportunity for reading them. . . .—Yours affectionately,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Nephew, (now) Admiral George A. Giffard, C.M.G.

CAIRO, *December* 17, 1883.

. . . The recent success of the Mahdi will in all probability lead to the abandonment of the Soudan and to the withdrawal of the Egyptian frontier to somewhere about the Second Cataract, possibly to the First. The utter collapse of Egypt, both in its civil government and in its military capabilities, now become so apparent, will lead, I think, to our assuming the Protectorate of the country, as the only means of guarding it against anarchy and ruin, and that we are bound to guard against, not only from the obligations we have in-

curred towards other powers, but in our own interests as regards the road to India. If we don't assume this charge it will sooner or later devolve upon some other power, and that would never do. The Egyptian has lately proved himself beyond all doubt to be entirely devoid of any fighting power, and the defence, even of his own country, must be undertaken by others ; the same remark applies in an equal degree to his capacity for governing—corruption, tyranny, and selfishness are too deeply engrained in the leading classes. I may and probably shall have, before many months, to go to the proposed new frontier, possibly Assouan, to support the Egyptian army in its defence in the event of the Mahdi making an advance upon Egypt Proper. . . .

To his Nephew, Henry Rycroft Giffard

CAIRO, *December* 17, 1883.

. . . A very great change has come over affairs in this part of the world ; the first result will be, I imagine, an English Protectorate, if not annexation. I see no other way out of the difficulties Egypt has got herself into. The Soudan must be abandoned, if not entirely, at all events all the country must go to the south and west of Khartoum and Sennar. If England assumes a Protectorate, she could, of course, if she wished it, retain the country to the east of the Nile as far as Sennar, which would be quite enough of the Soudan to keep for the present ; but if she does not assume the Protectorate, I see no chance of Egypt being able to do so, for she has neither soldiers nor governing capacities for the Soudan, and she must in that case content herself with a frontier at Assouan or Korosko. Under any circumstances my return is not likely to take place yet awhile. I don't imagine that the Mahdi will prove a very formidable enemy ; with judicious management a portion of his present adherents may be induced to abandon him, but if they do not, the very considerable distance which separates him from Egypt Proper, the

want of water over a great portion of it, and the difficulty of obtaining supplies, will make any advance on his part as far as the frontier of Egypt a matter of a very long time, if ever he should carry it out at all. The only thing we have really to look to is a religious rising, but I hardly expect it. . . .

To the Miss Stephensons

CAIRO, *December* 21, 1883.

MY DEAR SISTERS,—This is to wish you a merry Christmas and happy New Year. . . . Affairs out here have taken a very important turn lately, but recent information from Khartoum has been satisfactory in one or two respects ; first, there is plenty of food, *i.e.* corn, in the town, enough for the small garrison there for six months, and enough for the civil population for one year ; besides which, the harvest is very good and has not been reaped yet, so there is no cause for anxiety there as respects food ; then again, some of the outlying garrisons are expected to be in Khartoum by the end of the month—but not all, for they are terribly scattered, one being at Gondokoro, within 5° of the Equator ! What is of greater consequence still, if the rumour is correct, is that the tribes about Kordofan are far from being at one with the Mahdi. He, the Mahdi, has informed one of them that he intends to come and punish them for having given assistance to the Egyptians. The reply was : " We are 15,000 strong, all warriors, with plenty of supplies—come on." Another tribe has been threatened in a similar way. These dissensions are satisfactory for the Egyptian Government, who ought, by diplomacy and a judicious administration of backshish, to be able to check any aggressive movement of the Mahdi towards Egypt. On the other hand, General Baker,[18] who will be at Suakin on the 24th, will not, I imagine, be able to open up the road to Berber for some time. News has been received that the wells along the line of route have been destroyed—distance,

240 miles—and that nothing but a brackish water is left ; besides this difficulty to surmount he will have to organise his very motley force, so that he will require time before he will be able to make a forward movement. I have the greatest confidence in him, and am satisfied that whatever is possible to be done he will do. But the Soudan must be abandoned—Egypt cannot hold it ; there is not an atom of fighting power in the natives, and the administration of that distant country has been corrupt and oppressive. The Soudanese are better without a Government at all than with such a one as Egypt has furnished them with. Turkey may come to Egypt's help, but I don't think she will, and there lies the only chance for preserving the country. An English Protectorate is much talked of here, and I think that must come before long.

Cairo, *January* 12, 1884.— . . . We are in the midst of stirring events out here, a change of Ministry having been quite recently effected, which, I think, promises well both for England and Egypt. I consider the present state of things as virtually the commencement of our Protectorate. Nubar Pasha, the new Premier, is an avowed friend of England, desirous of extending his influence in this country and of seeing Englishmen controlling the various departments of the State, if not actually at their head. This, in point of fact, is what is actually being done now, for, with the exception of Nubar himself, there is not, I understand, a single member of the new Government who is a man of any note—they are practically dummies. In one, the Home Department, this remark is specially applicable, the real working man in it being Clifford Lloyd,[19] who has been appointed Under Secretary, a man of great ability, industry, sound judgment, firmness, and courage ; he will have under his charge, police, prisons, the Mudirs, or governors of districts, and other duties connected with Home work—the three subjects which I have named especially requiring supervision and reform, which, under the old system, it was hopeless to expect,

The Finance Department is also under a man who knows about as much of the subject as the man in the moon ; this will also be worked by Vincent, another Englishman. Public Works, a department of special importance, as it embraces the spirit of irrigation throughout the country, upon which its very existence depends, and which opens perhaps a wider field for peculation and dishonesty than any other, will, I believe, though this is not finally settled at the time I am writing, be also, to all intents and purposes, controlled by Colonel Scott Moncrieff,[20] an Indian officer of great experience and intelligence. Foreign Affairs and Justice will probably be both taken in hand by Nubar himself, at both of which he is an adept. I had a long and friendly visit from Nubar yesterday, and had a very interesting talk with him. He was very energetic in expressing his sense of the necessity for the English troops remaining in Egypt and at Cairo, adding that if we went the Khedive would not remain long after us, nor himself, nor his Government either. The Egyptian Government, having now decided upon the abandonment of the Soudan, the difficult question arises as to how best to get the different garrisons out of the country with as little loss as possible, together with the officials, women, children, and others who may wish to leave. It is a delicate operation, requiring much good management, for the distances are very great, and the country through which the movement will be made is hostile ; moreover, the Egyptians have not hitherto shown much love for fighting, though perhaps, with their faces turned towards home, they may do better than heretofore. One garrison must certainly be abandoned and cannot be withdrawn, and that is the one in the Equatorial district, somewhere about 5° N. The Egyptian Government mean, however, to retain Suakin and possibly Massowah, so as still to keep a hold on the Soudan. . . .

To his Niece, Emily Harriet Stephenson

CAIRO, *January* 21, 1884.

. . . The great event I am looking forward to is the arrival of Chinese Gordon.[21] He is, I think, by far the best man the Government really could have sent out, and if anyone can get the Egyptian Government out of their Soudan difficulties he will. At the same time, with all his remarkable qualities, he is very eccentric and impulsive, taking a strong liking one day which he turns the next into violent aversion ; one of the objects of this latter feeling just now is, I understand, the Khedive. His present intention is not to come to Cairo, whether on account of the Khedive or not I can't say, but to go straight through the Canal to Suez direct. I hope he will be dissuaded from this course, as it is of consequence that he should consult with Sir E. Baring before proceeding on his mission. We are still very anxious about the safety of numerous garrisons, with their civil populations, in the Soudan, and as to how to get them out of the country. The enterprise is a most difficult one and makes us all very anxious. All this trouble with the Soudan has been brought about by the gross misgovernment, corruption, and abuse of power of Egypt and her officials. There was no reason for this outbreak if the people in these parts had only been governed by ordinary rules of justice and consideration for the welfare of the people ; instead of which they have been oppressed, overtaxed, and treated like dogs. At last the various tribes revolted and the insurrection has to some extent assumed the appearance of a religious movement. I don't myself at present entertain any apprehensions upon the score of a religious war, but believe that by judicious management and by the administration of a little backshish, many of the tribes will fall away from the Mahdi, and that the people generally will feel satisfied with having got the Egyptians out of their country.

To his Sister

CAIRO, *January* 26, 1884.

MY DEAR MINNY,— . . . You talk of reading the life of Chinese Gordon—he called upon me himself yesterday, and we had an interesting conversation, during which he told me that our Government had made up their mind irrevocably that the Soudan was to be abandoned, and that his mission consisted in employing the best means in his power by using his influence with the different tribes or otherwise, to effect the withdrawal of the different garrisons, civil population, with their women and children, etc., from the Soudan with as little loss as possible. Most of the tribes are in rebellion, and it will be an operation of difficulty and serious danger unless the wild tribes can be conciliated. Gordon is the most likely man to exercise this desirable result, and should he fail we must not be surprised to hear of loss of life among the fugitives during their retreat. Gordon himself is a man of moderate height, apparently a little over fifty, with greyish hair and eyes, and a quiet, unpretending manner which covers, however, a determined mind and a courageous spirit such as few men possess ; he is thoroughly disinterested, never thinking of himself, and imbued with a deep religious feeling. He will enter upon his mission with his life in his hand, trusting to his fearless nature and the recollection of the influence he exercised a few years ago in that country. He leaves to-night, accompanied by Colonel Stewart,[22] his military secretary, and no one else, travelling up the Nile to a place called Korosko, then across the desert for about 250 miles, until he strikes the Nile again, up which he will go as best he can for about 400 miles before he reaches Khartoum—total distance from Cairo about 1300 miles. Distances from place to place are great out here, and are not realised at home. The policy of abandoning the Soudan is a very large question, leading to important consequences which one cannot as yet wholly foresee,

but which may seriously affect our own Government.—Yours very affectionately,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Niece, Agnes Henrietta Stephenson

CAIRO, *February* 3, 1884.

MY DEAR AGNES,— . . . We are living in interesting times out here, and if passing events do one no other good they at all events make one at home in the geography of these parts; for I find that there is nothing like being upon the spot to impress upon the memory the localities of any part of the world. The distances between them here are immense and are difficult to realise—one measures them by hundreds of miles, or at least by degrees. I gather from Sir C. Dilke's speech of the 22nd of January that the policy of our Government with regard to the Soudan will undergo some modification, and that instead of abandoning the country altogether they will endeavour to establish governments there under the suzerainty of Egypt, which will at the same time resign all attempts at governing any portion of it themselves, with the exception of the Red Sea ports, and perhaps one or two others, Zeila and Berbera, just outside the Straits of Bab-el-Mendeb. I think if some such arrangement as this could be arrived at it would be the best solution of this difficult question. There are some important points connected with the evacuation of the Soudan which are not easily disposed of and may give some trouble to our Government as well as to Egypt. In the first place this policy results in allowing this vast tract of country to lapse again into barbarism, which is an ugly charge for a liberal and progressive Government to face. Next, the slave trade will revive in full force, checked only, and I should fear inadequately, by our cruisers in the Red Sea. Lastly, there is the uncertainty as to who Egypt's next neighbour is to be. These are all difficult subjects to deal with, and will have im-

portant consequences in the future. Our Government has committed itself to non-intervention in the Soudan, though it has not worked very consistently upon those lines, and has compelled the late Egyptian Government to resign, because they would not adopt the policy of abandoning the country. No retention of any portion of it can therefore be made with the slightest regard to consistency and fair dealing, so that at the present moment I can see no solution except in the direction I have hinted at. Both General Baker's and Gordon's movements, which we are now watching here with much interest and some anxiety, will, if successful, as I feel confident they will be, materially help us out of these troubles. The success of the former will alienate, I expect, many of the tribes on the eastern coast of the Red Sea from adherence to the Mahdi. Gordon's negotiations will, I trust, effectually destroy all allegiance to him to the eastward of the White Nile. We shall see. My friends the Romillys leave us on Tuesday ; we had a parting dinner for them on Friday, with a dance afterwards. Last night we had a farewell dinner at a certain Princess Nazli's, a first cousin of the Khedive ; she is attractive both in looks and intellect, and is the only native lady who receives and entertains. To-morrow a number of officers and others give a fancy ball, for which they use this house. . . .—Ever yours affectionately,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

February 8, 1884.

You will have heard, long before this reaches you, all about the sad result of General Baker's operations in the Soudan, of the disgraceful way in which the Egyptians behaved, and the loss of life as well as of his guns. The result is very serious, and the two garrisons of Sinkat and Tokar, whose relief was the object of his expedition, must now be sacrificed, and it is extremely doubtful whether General Gordon will succeed in saving Khartoum and the other garrisons in that ex-

tensive region. A few days ago I was very sanguine as to the results of both Baker's and Gordon's missions, but now that that of the former has failed I am doubtful about the latter ; for those wild tribes will now be so excited by their recent successes that they are hardly likely to be influenced by Gordon, or indeed any other consideration than that of driving out, or more probably massacring, the hated Egyptians. The evacuation of the Soudan will now be effected in all probability under the most distressing circumstances, and as England has forced this measure upon Egypt, she must take her share of the odium which will result from the manner in which this policy has been carried out. I don't mean to blame our Government for compelling Egypt to give up a country which she was utterly incapable of governing, and as England did not wish to entangle herself in assuming authority over such an immense extent of country (having already upon her hands as much as she can manage) we were right probably in adopting this policy. But the way in which this has been carried out is quite another thing. Gordon should have been sent out as soon as this measure was decided upon ; he would then have had every chance of succeeding in saving the garrisons and the civil population connected with them, and he might even have come to terms with the Mahdi, or at all events have established some authority or government over the country before abandoning it ; whereas now nothing but barbarism, slave trade, and other horrors will reign there unchecked, until some other foreign Power establishes itself there, and makes itself a very unpleasant neighbour to Egypt. I had a letter this morning from General Gordon from Korosko, dated the 1st. He was very sanguine about getting to Khartoum all right, and had summoned the neighbouring sheikhs to meet him there. We have since heard of him at Abou Hamed, and he expects to be at Berber on the 10th. Between there and Khartoum the telegraph is cut, and the country is up ; he says that the Mahdi will never dream of coming north, but will make

for the Bahr el Gazel and there carry on the slave trade.

To Lieutenant-Colonel F. Romilly

CAIRO, *March* 18, 1884.

. . . . I don't give you accounts of Graham's movements, because you will have seen them in the newspaper long before this reaches you. Our Government in the meanwhile is being led on by public opinion and the force of circumstances—the result of their lamentable former inaction and supineness — into operations far more extensive than they originally intended, and it is difficult to say where they will be eventually landed.

Graham is now moving on in the direction of Sinkat, and how far he will advance in the direction of Berber I cannot say. The opening up of this route would be of course an immense point gained, but to effect this we must be assisted by friendly tribes operating in our direction from Berber and meeting us as far on the road as they can. Under any circumstances—and I understand that a friendly tribe has offered to co-operate from Berber for the distance of 60 miles—the operation will be a very difficult one with our small force, a trying climate, and deficiency of water ; the disposal of the sick, which must be looked to, will entail the formation of halting-places on the line of march for their protection. . . . We are anxious about Gordon ; he is hemmed in at Khartoum, but has six months' provisions.—Ever sincerely yours,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Elizabeth Romilly

CAIRO, *March* 25, 1884.

. . . To-morrow's operations will, I hope, be the last of the campaign ; I doubt, however, there being any more fighting to-morrow. . . . General Gordon is

in difficulties in Khartoum, and is anxious for some support to be sent to him as far as Berber. If our Government decide upon sending him some assistance we must do the best we can, but it will be a serious undertaking to send men this long distance—about 250 miles from Suakin to Berber—at this hot season, with an inadequate supply of water; one portion of the distance, 105 miles, has only one supply of water halfway. . . . We are still without instructions as to how Suakin is to be garrisoned when Graham's force returns, and time passes. No decision has been arrived at as to what ruling power is to exist in the Soudan whenever Gordon shall find himself able to withdraw from Khartoum. Unless some arrangement is made for establishing some sort of government over the various tribes, a state of chaos must ensue, ending in their absorption by some strong hand, which will probably be the source of much future trouble to Egypt and ourselves.

While I am writing a telegram has just arrived from Berber to say that for some days past communication has been cut between there and Khartoum, which is now besieged by the Arab tribes of the neighbourhood, and that others are coming to their assistance. . . .

To his Sister

CAIRO, *May* 9, 1884.

MY DEAR MINNY,— . . . Although getting on for the middle of May, we are having the most enjoyable weather. . . . We have had a few bouts of the Khamsun wind, which when it blows hard is also called the Simoom; it is a terribly hot, depressing wind, and its blast is like that of a furnace filling the air with dust, and giving the sun, when not obscuring it altogether, the appearance of a very dull moon. . . . Our political atmosphere is far more unsatisfactory, and must continue so until England adopts a more decided and energetic policy out here, which she does not seem inclined to do. I have been much occupied lately in

drawing up a report which the Government has called upon me to make, and which I have just sent home, of the best route for an expedition to Khartoum in the event of one being undertaken. It seems very likely that an expedition will be organised later in the year to extricate Gordon. The undertaking will be a very serious one, owing to the distance, climate, and want of water. For instance—as regards distance—from Cairo to Khartoum by the Nile is 1600 miles; should troops have to go by that route it would take more than four months. Another possible route is from the port of Massowah along the portion of Abyssinia which would bring you not far south of Khartoum.—Ever yours affectionately, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

CAIRO, *May* 21, 1884.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . The situation in this part of the world does not improve as time goes on, and it is extremely difficult to make out what the Government policy is. So far as I can see, their one object is to shake themselves clear of Egypt as quickly as they can and almost at any price. But it is doubtful whether they have been going the right way to work to effect this end; on the contrary, they have been forced by public opinion into action which has been neither well timed nor properly thought out. This country is now in a very unsettled and unsatisfactory state; it is entirely without any government: our own does not assume sufficient authority; it dictates pretty freely to that of the Khedive (but without taking any decisive measures of its own), which it almost paralyses. Baring is away, and Clifford Lloyd's control of reforms is at an end. He goes away in a day or two, leaving the Home Department with its unorganised police, and local administration of the provinces in a condition of formation and reconstruction. In fact, our Government seem to be giving up

all their former intentions of reform, or at all events most of them, and to be allowing this country to lapse into its old condition of misrule. Intrigues are rife all over the country, instigated to a great extent by the French, who are gradually assuming a very prominent position and checking our influence in every possible way. If we don't mind what we are about, we shall have a serious misunderstanding with them before long. They are, I understand, occupying, if they have not already done so, some fresh territory near a small settlement of theirs—Obok—outside the Red Sea; some of their troops on their way home from Tonquin will be passing there shortly, and may possibly land there with a view of extending their influence into the interior of the country, and ultimately in all probability in the direction of Khartoum. They have a Consul there who went up after Gordon did, though with no ostensible object, for they have no interests there to guard, but his presence there may give them an excuse for interfering in the relief of Khartoum. The finances of the country are, as you are aware, in a bad state. Taxes in many parts of the country cannot be collected and will have to be levied in kind with, of course, a heavy loss in the expense of transporting this produce to Alexandria before it can be turned into money, which when realised may keep the country going for a month or two. It will be some time before the results of the Conference [23] will be known, and these will probably take the form of national control, in some modified form as regards France, over the government of the country; some satisfactory arrangement may be arrived at on this subject, but some fixed and settled system must be adopted in some form or other. You may think that I am painting things somewhat *en noir*, but I give you my impressions and I don't think they are exaggerated. . . .—Ever yours affectionately,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Elizabeth Romilly

CAIRO, *May* 30, 1884.

. . . Affairs here are in a most unsatisfactory state ; the country is virtually without a government, Clifford Lloyd is gone, leaving the constabulary still unformed and the government of the provinces entirely in the hands of Nubar, who will revert to the old system of administering them, with its accompanying corruption and tyranny. Intrigues are rife all over the country, instigated by the French ——, Mahdi emissaries and communists, who are all doing their best to undermine our influence and get us out of the country. It is all very sad, for the English are becoming unpopular, and our prestige is on the wane.

The bad state the country is in is attributed to us, and in some respects with justice, for our Government sits still with folded arms and does nothing.

Just at this important moment our Consul-General is away, and Egerton, who acts for him, a hard-working, amiable, nice fellow, is of course new to the work, has still got to learn the ways and habits of the people and their rulers, and cannot exercise the same amount of influence as if he were permanently H.M.'s Agent. . . .

. . . In the meantime the Egyptian army is being gradually pushed up the Nile to meet any threatened movements of the tribes in the Northern Soudan against the frontier of Upper Egypt.

Our house here is in rather a rickety state. After the collapse outside the verandah, it was thought desirable to examine the verandah itself ; the beams supporting the floor were found to be rotten, and have been replaced by iron ones : this led to a further examination of the house, and now a portion of the roof will have to be removed. . . .

To his Sister

CAIRO, *June* 28, 1884.

MY DEAR MINNY,—Our autumn campaign I look upon as a settled thing, but whether I shall take a part in it myself, or whether the whole expedition will be organised from home and be entirely independent of this command I cannot say. In the meantime I am busy making certain preparations for it—buying horses and making arrangements for laying down a railway which it is in contemplation to make from Suakin to Berber. This afternoon we celebrate at six o'clock the Queen's birthday; the whole force will be on parade, and I shall take the opportunity of delivering on parade two Victoria Crosses and some half-dozen civil medals for gallantry in the field during the late campaign. In the evening I give a dinner to generals and staff officers. We shall sit down twenty-two, as many as the room will hold; I am afraid we shall be very hot. The Khedive is now at Alexandria enjoying the sea breezes, and Cairo is pretty nearly deserted by all who can find an excuse for going away. My occupation this summer is very different from what it was last year,—one's mind then was full of Pyramids, antiquities, and Egypt generally, until the cholera came to enliven us; this year it is war and rumours of war, and intrigues without end. . . . —Yours affectionately, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Elizabeth Romilly

CAIRO, *June* 29, 1884.

. . . We are threatened with intended inroads into Upper Egypt from some of the Soudan tribes; it is difficult to say whether these people will come on in force or not, at all events we are making preparations for them; possibly they will do little more than try and make raids upon some town or other on the Nile.

There are now five battalions of Egyptians, with cavalry and guns, at and above Assouan, and I have sent

up a battalion of our own, the Sussex, to give them a little stiffening, and another battalion of the Duke of Cornwall's will start for Kench in three or four days.

A company of engineers is gone to Suakin to make a jetty there for landing the railway plant on its way from England for the railway to Berber. This looks like business, and I look upon an autumn campaign in these parts as quite a settled thing. We are still without news of Gordon. Rumours are abroad that he had driven back with loss a force which the Mahdi had sent against Khartoum, but these tales are not to be depended upon.

Our little flotilla of Cook's steamers, manned by the navy and converted into armed cruisers, are in full use; they are constantly moving about from place to place between Assanot and Wady Halfa, and are of great service, as they make a very useful impression upon the people all along the Nile. You would hardly recognise the boat that took you up the Nile, now manned by bluejackets, armed with a gatling and flying the Union Jack.

We are still living in a country which is in reality without a Government; our own interferes just enough to make Nubar feel that all responsibility is taken off his hands; there is no feeling of security for the future, and under such a system as that affairs naturally drift on from bad to worse. The chief desire in Nubar's mind is to shake himself clear of English control, and allow the administration of the country to fall back into its former evil ways.

. . . We had the usual birthday parade yesterday, and I was not sorry for an excuse for letting the Cairenes see the amount of force which we have at our disposal. . . .

To his Brother

CAIRO, *September* 22, 1884.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . I have been very loath to allude to the subject of Wolseley's [24] appointment

to the chief command in Egypt, for I naturally felt it very keenly, do so still, and probably ever shall, but I was anxious not to express myself upon the subject more than I could possibly help, but to keep my temper, submit, and put the best face on the matter I could. If I were to make any complaint it would be upon the grounds that I was sent out here at all. You recollect the circumstances, how anxious I was, for various reasons,—expense and family matters, etc.,—to avoid taking up the appointment, which was literally foreced upon me. Under these circumstances it was to be presumed that I was, at all events, considered fit for any duty that might attach to this command, if not, nothing can justify the selection. But since I have been out here I have received repeated expressions of praise for the manner in which the duty has been carried on, far in excess of what I honestly think I have deserved. No later than August 5th, H.R.H.,[25] having heard a false report that I had been unwell, writes: "I hope you will take great care of yourself, for your health and strength are invaluable to us. Everybody coming home is full of your praises (underlined) and the admirable manner in which," etc. etc. Later he writes: "I am glad to think that the whole conduct of this difficult operation is intended to be carried out under your direction." The preparations for any eventuality that might occur in the shape of an expedition, which we knew would be decided upon at the last moment, when great pressure would arise, were being energetically carried on, and very hard work it was, the difficulties being increased by obstructions, hints, queries, and general interference in the matter of detail on the part of the War Office. These remarks don't apply to H.R.H., who has never interfered with me, but has confined himself to a few broad principles of a practical character to be acted on or not as I thought best. Under these circumstances the unexpected announcement that Wolseley was coming out, not merely to superintend the organising of the small boat scheme,

but to take the chief command altogether, organise the force, appoint the staff, which was to be specially left in my hands, and command the expedition, was very startling. Not only am I put aside by this arrangement, but Earle, who was specially appointed to command the expedition, has now been relegated to an inferior position, to which he submits, to his great credit, without a word of complaint. One word about the immediate cause or pretext for sending Wolseley out. The Upper Nile had been selected at home for the line of operations to Khartoum, and my opinion had been solicited as to the employment, for the purpose, of 400 boats containing 12 men each. I had already recommended the use of local craft as a means of transport, which has been already employed successfully in transporting to Dongola the first instalment of men, with their month's supply. After a careful study of the river, with its cataracts and other difficulties, and considering the risk and other objections in the way of working their boats with inexperienced soldiers, and after consultation with the naval authorities, who had been specially employed in surveying the Cataracts, I expressed my opinion that the employment of small boats under such circumstances was impracticable. This remark did not apply to the Nile as a line of operation, but merely to the employment of those boats to be worked by soldiers. Lord Hartington then telegraphs that, after careful consideration of the whole question, H.M.'s Government are of opinion that it would be unfair to throw upon me the responsibility of carrying out a scheme which did not meet with my approval, a degree of susceptibility for my feelings which was certainly not manifested when I was originally appointed to this command. This was, I think, rather an unworthy suggestion, for it implied in reality that they mistrusted my sense of duty in carrying out to the best of my abilities any instructions of theirs, simply because I did not approve of them. I have given you a rough outline of the state of the case. If

you can get access to a Blue book marked "Confidential," and entitled *Report of the Nile* [Expedition], by Commander Hammil, R.N. 160, 87 W.O., quite recently printed, you will find at page 26 a letter from the Admiral, Lord John Hay, expressing a very strong opinion of the impracticability of using these small boats. I may be, and I hope for the success of the expedition that I may be, wrong in the view that I have taken. At the same time it must be borne in mind that the conditions under which those boats are to be worked are very different from those entertained, or at all events made known to me when I gave my opinion. It now appears that 500 Canadian boatmen and 300 Krumen are coming out to help to manage these boats. Steam engines and trucks suited to the peculiar gauge of the Wady Halfa railway are coming all the way from the Cape; one or two steamers are coming out in pieces, to be put together above the Cataracts, and Wolseley has apparently unlimited *carte blanche* to cover any expenditure and adopt any measures he may think necessary to ensure the success of any expedition which the Government may order, although, as usual, at the eleventh, I may almost say the twelfth hour. I must add, to conclude this long story, that they have requested me to remain on here while Wolseley remains, to render any assistance I can; to this I have, of course, consented, but I have written to Whitmore [26] to beg that as soon as my advice! and assistance! are no longer required I may be finally recalled, and I have further urged this upon the score of expenses attending my position out here, which have already placed me a few hundred pounds out of pocket, for which I shall never be recouped.

To his Sister

CAIRO, *October* 13, 1884.

MY DEAR MINNY,— . . . I am still a little uncertain as to my immediate movements, but sorry as I shall

be to give up a life here, which I have until lately enjoyed very much, I shall not be sorry, I must confess, to get clear of it. I will let you know as soon as I hear from the War Office. The Government are incurring very heavy expenditure in the somewhat unnecessary preparations which are being made for this expedition, which even up to now the Government, so far as I know, has not actually ordered. They will not send a force beyond Dongola if they can possibly help it. Lord Northbrook [27] returns to Cairo about the 18th. He will then remain here about a week, returning home by Port Said and visiting the battlefield of Tel-el-Kebir, where I shall probably accompany him.

To Lady Elizabeth Romilly

CAIRO, *October* 13, 1884.

. . . The preparations for an expedition are being actually carried on. These small boats from England have priority of claim upon the river transport, and so far as I can judge will be nothing but a source of very great and useless expenditure. I am satisfied that with timely notice and good management the native boats procurable on the Nile, whether from Dongola or below the Second Cataract, would have sufficed for our requirements, and that at a comparatively insignificant cost. A quite unnecessary fuss is now being made of this expedition; with the means at our disposal in this country, we could have concentrated, had the Government wished it, by this time at Dongola three or four battalions with mounted infantry, guns, and stores, ready for a further move forward, and more would soon be following. The climate is now pleasant enough, and would be no impediment to the troops marching the whole way, if necessary, from Sarras to Dongola. I believe that the route from there to Khartoum is virtually open, whether across the Desert or by the river; judging from all the reports we have lately received, there would be little, if any, opposition.

The same may be said of the Suakin-Berber route ; my belief is that a small English force to support the friendly tribes would be sufficient for the purpose. Both Osman Digna's and the Mahdi's followers are, according to all reports, falling off, and I fully believe this to be the case ; the former have been suffering much from want of food and from sickness, and many of them have withdrawn to cultivate their lands. Another cause for this defection is the rumour, no doubt much exaggerated, of the advance of our English army, and the native tribes, in true Oriental spirit, are turning round to what they believe to be the strongest side. These two causes are not permanent, and unless the prestige of our advance is maintained by our establishing some settled government in the Soudan before Graham leaves it, our present influence will naturally vanish, and the Mahdi, Digna, and Co. will then exercise greater power than ever.

The difficulty of establishing future order and government in the Soudan consists in the determination of our Government to abandon the country altogether —an impossible policy, which the force of circumstances must convince the country of before long.

The fittest man, in my opinion, to replace Gordon in Khartoum is the Mudir of Dongola, who has proved his ability, courage, and firmness of character. A Circassian by birth, he is a devoted Mussulman, and exercises great influence over his subjects in that capacity. . . .

To his Sister

CAIRO, *November* 23, 1884.

MY DEAR ISABELLA,— . . . We are getting on here slowly and steadily with our Nile Expedition, but it will not be ready for the final move to Khartoum for another month. The distances to be got over are enormous and not easy to realise ; the difficulties, too, on the way are considerable ; both, however, are being got over as well as possible, thanks to the energy, skill,

and goodwill of those concerned. Once our troops [*are*] at Khartoum I don't think it likely that they will come away for some little time ; the removal of the garrison and such of the inhabitants as may wish to come away will take some little time, and our people will, of course, have to remain until this has been done. Then it will be necessary for us to leave behind us some sort of Government ; this will take some little time also. I had a very pleasant trip to the Nile the other day ; we did not go more than 70 miles up the river, as the wind did not favour us. We moored every night to the bank, and started the following day when the wind sprang up ; when there was no wind we went on shore, shooting snipe, pigeon, and sand grouse ; our days ended with whist. It was a pleasant idle life, which was very enjoyable while it lasted. With one exception there are no antiquities on this part of the river beyond those in the immediate neighbourhood of Cairo ; this one exception is a very remarkable one, a kind of Pyramid of earlier date than those of Gizeh, built of the usual massive stones, hewn and jointed with a perfection of workmanship which would baffle the stonemasons of the present day. The Pyramids of Gizeh existed, as you probably know, before the time of Abraham ; this one is probably a few hundred years older still.

To his Brother

CAIRO, *January* 11, 1885.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . The Nile Expedition is getting on famously, and Stewart's column may be expected in a day or two from now to be at Metemmeh, whence the distance from Khartoum is about 100 miles. At Metemmeh steamers will be lying which will enable communication to be at once opened up with Gordon. Stewart's column will, however, remain entrenched, I imagine, at this spot until joined towards the end of February by Earle's force, which [? *is taking*] the longer circuit of the Nile. When Earle reaches Abou Hamed,

the Desert route from there to Korosko will thus become open ; it was impracticable so long as its exit at Abou Hamed was occupied by the enemy in force. By this means supplies will reach the force on that part of the Nile far quicker than by the tortuous line of the Nile. Earle will then have to capture Berber on his way to join Stewart at Metemmeh. Fighting must, of course, be expected before Khartoum is reached. The Mahdi's force may collapse at our approach, but I doubt it. He has too many fanatics about him to make this likely, besides which his very existence as a Mahdi hangs upon successful opposition to us. What will happen after Khartoum is relieved it is difficult to say. The Soudan cannot be definitely abandoned until some stable government is established there which will ensure the tranquillity of the future frontier of Egypt, whatever that may ultimately be. In these days, when there is this absurd mania for colonising, such a country as the Soudan, and such a town as Khartoum, commanding as it does the fertile district of the Blue Nile and its tributaries, not to say Egypt itself, will infallibly be seized upon by some European Power, probably France, and what then becomes of Egypt ? If, therefore, some authority is to be established in the Soudan, such as will meet the requirements as regards safety of Egypt, time will be required to consolidate it as well as the presence of some force which will therefore have to remain over the summer. If our troops are all withdrawn before these measures are carried out, it will not be easy to calculate the serious consequences which must sooner or later result. I am afraid, however, that the policy of our Government will not be in this direction, and that they will think of nothing but a withdrawal from the Soudan at once, if the climate will admit of it. I have just returned from a pleasant trip to Suakin, where I found the troops improving in health. There is a good harbour, and the town is better and cleaner than I expected. The enemy come within long range every night nearly, to try and annoy

the garrison by a desultory and feeble rifle fire. Fremantle,[28] who is in command there, is well. . . . —Ever, my dear William, yours very affectionately,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Sister

CAIRO, *February* 1, 1885.

MY DEAR MINNY,— . . . Stirring events have taken place since you last wrote: the march across the Bayuda Desert, the actions of January 17th and 19th and the intermediate night march, and the operations which attended the last fight, are most creditable to all concerned—to Wolseley for his bold conceptions, and to officers and men for the splendid manner in which his plan was carried out. The pluck, steadiness, and endurance of the officers and men deserve all the praise that we can give them. I feel proud of them indeed, and don't believe that any other army in the world would have performed such a feat with so small a body of men. They still have work before them, but I doubt if the enemy will fight again with his former spirit. The column under Stewart now entrenched at Goobat will not be able to carry on any further operation until reinforced. Two battalions and a portion of the Camel Corps not hitherto engaged are now on their way or about starting from Koorti for this purpose, and as the infantry go on foot, it will take them at least fourteen days to reach the Nile again. I do not feel thoroughly satisfied about Stewart's wound; the last accounts I received were certainly favourable, but the ball, which penetrated the groin, has not been yet extracted. Earle's column, which is moving up the Nile, may possibly have a fight in a day or two; he is now about 7 miles off the enemy, where they occupy a strong position, but it is doubtful if they will stand. He has got Berber to attack, which he will not reach under four weeks; that is to say, that by the end of this month he will have effected a junction with Wolseley, who will then be at

Stewart's camp—Goobat. Did I ever tell you that this General Stewart is the son of the Rev. — Stewart whom you must have known at Winchester, when you were living in Dome Alley in the Close? The father was a very clever, agreeable man, with a handsome wife. He had a living somewhere near Winchester, and was, I believe, a Canon [29] of the Cathedral. The son, the present General, must have been quite a boy at that time. I had been thinking of going up the Nile for a fortnight, but recent events have put this quite out of the question; the party I was to have gone with, about seven in all, went without me, and it is quite upon the cards that after all I may find myself back in England without having seen Luxor, Thebes, and the many places of interest in Upper Egypt—it can't be helped. Fremantle has been bombarding Osman Digna's [30] people in a camp they have formed about 9 miles from Suakin, but he found them too strongly posted and too numerous to warrant an attack with the handful of troops at his command, even if he would have been allowed to do so.

To his Brother

CAIRO, *February* 20, 1885.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,— . . . Events have been going on apace of late and have taken a very important turn. The fall of Khartoum and the death of poor Gordon will be attended with serious results, both moral and material; they will tend to raise the prestige of the Mahdi considerably, and increase the belief in his mission as a prophet. They will rally round him the wavering tribes, and increase considerably his present fighting power, which will be still further augmented by the troops and materials of war which the garrison and stores at Khartoum have now placed at his disposal. Khartoum will now be a difficult place to capture, and will in all probability be placed in a substantial state of defence by the help which the Mahdi is no doubt receiving from foreign adventurers. The advance upon Khartoum

must no doubt be delayed until the autumn. In the meantime we shall probably have to fall upon Korti, abandoning altogether the Bayuda Desert line, and occupy another line instead, from Abou Hamed to Hannek, along the Nile a good distance from the small force at Wolseley's disposal. If Berber could be captured it would be of very great advantage, but I doubt that being possible under present circumstances, and considering the approaching hot season that will probably have to stand over till the autumn. Brackenbury's [31] column, now on its way to Abou Hamed, will, I imagine, halt there and occupy that point, as the extreme left of the new line to be taken up. In the meanwhile Graham's force will, I hope, be able to advance from Suakin about the third week in March. His operations will commence, I should think, by going straight for Osman Digna and bearding him in his den at Tamai or Tamanite, establishing his force in the cooler and more healthy mountainous district in the neighbourhood, and thence hunting down O. D. from place to place, though I doubt his ever capturing him; the railway after his first success can then be constructed *pari passu* with his subsequent operations. Possibly he may be able by a combined operation with the Abou Hamed force to attack Berber, but this will, as I said before, have in all probability to be deferred until the autumn. Graham's [32] first success may be safely reckoned on to alienate many of Osman Digna's followers. These plans will, of course, be liable to considerable modification from circumstances as they arise. . . . Poor Earle's death has been a sad blow to us all. It has now been followed by that of Herbert Stewart. These are both of them very serious losses; the two men were first-rate officers and will not be easily replaced. . . .

To Mrs. Giffard

CAIRO, *March* 25, 1885.

MY DEAR ELLA,— . . . This will be a very poor and shabby letter, which unfortunately has been the

character of all my correspondence of late, and may be the cause, though I trust not, of getting me into difficulties with my old friends; but I am pretty well employed, and find it very hard to get through even a portion of my private correspondence. We seem in a pretty mess all round, and by the time this reaches you we may be at war with Russia: where such a war may spread to it is difficult to say; when once begun it will, not improbably, embrace the whole world. We are, generally speaking, much to blame in England for allowing such a state of things to exist on the Afghan frontier as has now been brought about. The country has been warned over and over again of what the encroachments of Russia in Central Asia pointed to, but it has preferred the blessed *far niente* existence of a fool's paradise to adopting energetic action at the moment and meeting the threatening movements of Russia at a favourable time. The country will now have to face as the result of its culpable indifference a serious war. The folly, the moral cowardice, many have shown in not choosing to see the palpable and continuous deceit of Russia is very sad. A stitch in time would have saved a great deal. As regards affairs out here, I am beginning to think that there will be no autumn campaign on the Upper Nile and that the Government do not seriously contemplate going to Khartoum at all. In the meantime, whether there be such a campaign or not, the troops on the Upper Nile will have a very, very trying summer to pass, which will result, I fear, in much loss of life from sickness. The Suakin force has already suffered considerably; probably to-day or to-morrow it will be at Tamai, and then the results of this campaign may be virtually decided. The most serious consideration next to our loss in men is that of the transport animals, which are required in large numbers and not so easily replaced. I must close abruptly, for the post corporal is waiting.—Ever yours affectionately,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Sister

CAIRO, *April* 13, 1885.

MY DEAR MINNY,—Wolseley has just come down here, and his wife and daughter have come out from England to meet him. I have a big dinner for them on Wednesday for twenty-two, and on Thursday the Khedive gives another; on Friday, Wolseley and staff go down to Suakin, where they will remain about a week. I am afraid there is no likelihood of my tumbling into the Secretaryship at the Horse Guards which you wrote about some time ago. I have heard nothing of it, and the appointment which should have been vacant on the 1st of this month has been temporarily renewed. If I could not have been spared from here then, I cannot be now, and how long this Soudan business will last no one can tell. A curious extract from the *Daily Telegraph* has been published here to-day, announcing that the Italian Government is prepared to take over the occupation of the Soudan, in the event of our troops, which are now there, being required for India. I cannot quite believe this, although some such arrangement will have to be made, perhaps with the Turks, if we go to war with Russia, for we cannot afford to have two wars upon our hands at the same time. When are we going to get rid of this wretched Gladstone and his useless Government? It is really a shame upon us that we allow our country to be so long misruled by such people. The Russians and the French, as well as the Germans, are playing with their credulity, what they are pleased to call forbearance, and incapacity, and our country is being lowered and its interests neglected.

We are having the most delightful weather you can possibly imagine, nothing can be more perfect; no real heat, nothing but the most delicious warmth—how you would enjoy it!

CAIRO, *June* 6, 1885.—It is impossible to say what is likely to happen here, but I am beginning to get very

sick of serving such a Government as our present one: the result is nothing but discredit and mortification to us all. . . .

To Lady Elizabeth Romilly

CAIRO, *August* 3, 1885.

. . . The political atmosphere seems much more temperate since the new Ministry came into power. The very great tension which existed in our foreign relations with all the great powers except Italy has apparently relaxed, and we are no longer living, I think, upon the volcano which really at one time seemed ready to burst forth at any moment.

The Afghan question still remains open; the Russians see, I think, that England does not intend, under her present rulers, to make any more concessions, and they are endeavouring to delay coming to a final settlement in the hopes that the next election will bring back Mr. Gladstone and get still more out of him by cajolery and bullying.

Thank heavens we are rid of him and his followers, for a season at all events, and I dare say that as soon as Parliament is prorogued we shall see a little more clearly what the Government policy is likely to be, though I am afraid that until the general election turns out favourably for them, and gives them a firm hold of power, they will not be able to do very much for fear of a reversal of their policy.

Our relations with the Soudan seem also likely to take a better turn. The death of the Mahdi, which I now believe in, will, if true, remove the chief element of disturbance, and it will take some time before his successor will be sufficiently established in power to do much mischief. Osman Digna remains a possible source of trouble; he is an able and an unscrupulous man, but I think that his followers are beginning to have enough of him, and show an evident disinclination to come into contact again with English troops.

We are waiting for the arrival of Sir D. Wolff,[33] and

are impatient to learn what the immediate object of his mission is; his going first to Constantinople looks like a possible alliance with the Sultan, and may be an attempt to induce him to take over the military government of the Soudan. Such an idea has been much discussed at times, and I know that Lord Northbrook was favourable to such a scheme as far as Suakin was concerned. I don't like the idea altogether; it certainly would be a solution of immediate difficulties, but unless the administration of the country was left in English hands, and the duties of the Turks limited to garrisoning the country, we should witness a repetition of the oppression and corruption which caused the Arab tribes to rise and shake off the Egyptian government.

I am doubtful as to whether we shall see the Barings back again. I have no particular reason for saying that they won't return beyond my belief that he has been so disgusted with the behaviour of the late Government throughout as regards Egypt, that he does not care to have anything more to do with the country, especially as he will now have to carry out the views of a Conservative Government. . . .—Yours very sincerely, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Sister

CAIRO, *September* 20, 1885.

MY DEAR MINNY,— . . . I am off the day after to-morrow for a tour of inspection to the Upper Nile, and shall be absent for about a month, unless anything unforeseen should occur to shorten or prolong my visit. There are several ports to visit, the farthest being about 850 miles off, so that I cannot do all that I want in much less time, more especially as I hope to add a little pleasure to the duty, by visiting on my way one or two places of interest, such as Luxor, Thebes, Philæ, etc.; it would be a great disappointment to return home without having seen those places, and this is

probably the last chance I shall have, for I expect very shortly to get promoted to full General, as I am now the senior Lieutenant-General, and, moreover, the Government are very anxious to reduce the force here, so that I don't suppose my stay can be prolonged many months more. The Soudan is still in an unsettled state, but I suppose it will calm down before long; in the meantime we are realising the mistake which has been committed in abandoning Dongola, where the enemy is now collecting a force, though perhaps not a very formidable one, partly, I think, with the object of getting food and plunder, and partly in the hope of being able, should circumstances prove favourable, of advancing still farther towards our frontier. There is a great dearth of reliable information which is a great drawback to any fixed plan being formed; accounts we receive from spies and others are very conflicting, often utterly untrustful, making it extremely difficult, often impossible, to arrive at the truth except by the use of one's own eyes and experience. The false Mahdi I believe to be dead, but there are some who still think he is shamming, and that he will make his appearance again with a halo of glory after an imaginary pleasant little trip to Paradise. Our hot weather has now left us, though I shall still find it on the Upper Nile, but down here the climate has become quite delightful again, and one can go about with impunity at all hours of the day. . . .

CAIRO, *November* 16, 1885.—You ask me in your last letter to tell you about my health. I never was better in my life, and as for fever, I never had anything more than a tendency to it for a couple of days—at least so I was told, for I never felt anything of it myself. I was knocked up at Luxor from the heat for a short time, but it was really nothing to speak of. I had had rather a trying day in the sun going over to Thebes to see the Tombs of the Kings, of which I don't mean to bore you with any description till I come home, and

then I shall probably give you more than you will care to listen to. I will only say that all I saw exceeded my expectations, and that the grandeur of many of the buildings baffles attempts at adequate description. The *Crescent and the Cross*, which I then read for the first time, disappointed me much ; the language is good, it is pretty writing, but the book is full of inaccuracies and really tells you little or nothing. Miss Edwardes' book, *A Thousand Miles up the Nile*, is, on the contrary, an excellent book, equally well written, accurate, and with valuable information. I like our new High Commissioner very much, and we get on very well together ; he is a clever man and very good company, but he is getting impatient for the arrival of the Turkish High Commissioner, without whom he cannot do much. I cannot help thinking that Turkey, like the rest of Europe, is much interested in the result of the English elections, and that she is delaying to take any active part with us in Egypt until she can see whether she will have to do with Lord Salisbury or Gladstone. I am in hopes that the Disestablishment question will give the Conservatives a few seats. . . . I will write more fully when I have more leisure. . . .

December 10, 1885.— . . . I am about to repeat my trip up the Nile sooner than I expected, and leave here the day after to-morrow for Wady Halfa, to look after the Soudanese, who are making themselves troublesome.

To Lady Elizabeth Romilly

ESNEH, *December* 15, 1885.

. . . Myself and personal staff, with Colonel Maitland, R.E., and Major Woodhouse, R.A., Egyptian army, are now on our way to Wady Halfa to give General Grenfell a helping hand and see what these troublesome Arabs are about.

We have a difficult frontier to defend, and not too

many troops to do it with, if what we hear of the enemy's preparations in the Soudan for a descent upon Egypt are at all correct ; there is already a pretty good force in our immediate front, which we must try and get rid of.

This Egyptian business seems endless, and I cannot see at present when matters will settle down. The action, as well as the inaction, of Mr. Gladstone's Government is the main cause of existing difficulties.

The absurdity of allowing Hicks's force to advance against Kordofan, resulting in encouraging the Mahdi and bringing him down to Khartoum, and all our subsequent military operations out here have resulted in nothing but irritating the Soudanese, exciting the fanaticism, and bringing about the present unsatisfactory state of affairs. . . . People were in daily expectation, when we left Cairo, to hear of the departure of Muktar Pasha from Constantinople ; whether he has arrived in Egypt by this time or not I don't yet know. I never was sanguine as to his coming, and still less as to any good he will do if he does come. Sir H. Wolff expected at one time great things from their co-operation in the affairs of Egypt. He fancied that the Turkish Commissioner would be influential in settling peaceably the present hostile demonstrations in the Soudan ; that the Sultan, as Sultan, would be able to do much in this direction, and still more as Caliph, but in neither capacity can he exercise any influence for good. Sir H. now sees, I think, that any attempt to use the Sultan's name for this purpose will only act as an irritant and do more harm than good. The very name of Turk is hated by these people, and the bent of their present fanaticism is to overturn the Caliphate.

What a curious and unsatisfactory political state we have arrived at in England—a regular impasse—neither side strong enough to govern, and the Irish apparently in the position of holding the balance of power. The only outcome seems to be a coalition between the moderate men on both sides. The time

seems to have arrived for some readjustment of party.

Whig and Tory days have long gone by, but the traditions and prejudices remain and are not easily destroyed. . . .—Yours very sincerely,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Brother

ABRI, *January* 1886.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—I little expected to find myself in my latter days campaigning again, but so it is, and here I am, at a pleasant spot upon the Upper Nile, at a village called Abri, about 140 miles south of Wady Halfa. Everything is going well with us, and I have a splendid little force under my command. It took some time to collect it at the front and bring up the necessary supplies and transport, but no time was lost, and directly we were ready we advanced. On the morning of the 30th I got up at 3.30, had a good breakfast, and marched off our compact little force at 5.30; there was a small amount of moonlight, everything was done in perfect silence, so as to enable us to get into position before dawn. This movement was most satisfactorily carried out, and the enemy in Giniss and along the river bank was completely taken by surprise. The position occupied by the enemy extended from a short distance south, or rather west, of our advanced fortified outpost at Kosheh, along the right bank of the Nile, and consisted of a series of mud houses, some of which were strongly occupied and obstinately defended; these were intersected at intervals by banks and watercourses running at right angles to the Nile, and offering a series of obstacles to that portion of our force which had to advance from Kosheh and drive back the enemy along this strip of ground which bordered the Nile for about three miles, until it reached the main part of the village of Giniss, beyond which, still along the river bank, was the enemy's camp, with his main body of cavalry, about 6000

strong. There was a range of gradually rising ground, running parallel with this line occupied by the enemy, which we had selected for our position, and which placed him between us and the Nile, which thus flowed directly in his rear. The strip of ground immediately in front of Kosheh would have cost the force advancing from there heavy loss in taking house by house, unless attacked as well in flank. The Kosheh force was therefore ordered not to attack until after our main body had got into position, and brought for half an hour an artillery fire to bear upon this strip ; this was supported by a direct fire from the fort. At the end of the half-hour the Camerons, supported by a small battalion of black troops, sallied out and attacked in gallant style, clearing house by house as they advanced ; so did our artillery, firing in front of them, and so helping their advance. In the meantime the 1st Brigade, some distance off and nearly opposite the main part of their village, with the cavalry well beyond, was attacked by the enemy, who sallied out of their camp, opened a very heavy fire upon us, which lasted about forty minutes, and attempted to turn our left. This attempt was met by good manœuvring on the part of General Butler, commanding the Brigade. The enemy were driven back and retreated in disorder to the westward, abandoning Giniss and their camp, which we then occupied, our whole force advancing from their position on the high ground. All was over by a quarter past nine, and the enemy completely routed in full retreat. I estimate their loss in killed at 600, and in wounded at twice, possibly three times, that amount. The enemy expected our main attack to be from Kosheh, and while this was going on they would probably have come out from their camp, occupied the high ground where our main position was, and come down upon our flank. Our plan just reversed this order of things and enabled us to play off their own game upon themselves. We are now following up the enemy with our cavalry, which we are pushing well to the front, and supporting it with our infantry, which

is echeloned along the Nile. You shall hear of my further proceedings. One of my chief sources of gratification has been picturing you and your surroundings to myself on receiving the first news of this success, which will, I am sure, have given you all pleasure. I never was in better health, and am surrounded by as cheery and fine a set of officers and men as the world can produce. I must confess, however, that I have for some time past had a time of much anxiety. If this affair of last Wednesday had gone otherwise than it has there is no knowing what amount of mischief might have ensued. The Soudan, already much excited, would have been encouraged to advance upon Egypt (it may do so still), Egypt itself and the bordering tribes would have been in a semi-state of revolt, and Cairo and its European communities would have been in a very unpleasant position, and much opprobrium would have fallen upon England. This is no exaggeration, and I can assure you that the sense of responsibility which these considerations imposed upon me has been rather a severe trial. When I left Cairo much uneasiness prevailed there, especially amongst the foreign communities, who were more or less in a state of alarm. I hope now that this is allayed. I think, too, that H.M.'s Government were not quite easy in their minds, in fact, I know that Lord Salisbury was not.—Ever yours affectionately,

FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To Lady Elizabeth Romilly

CAIRO, *May* 10, 1886.

. . . The much-talked-of Anglo-Turkish Convention, with its two High Commissioners, is doing no good at all, possibly some harm instead, . . . the Khedive is trying to gain favour with the Sultan by raising subscriptions—with very little of the voluntary about it—to assist him in his present financial need, and in order to protect the fellaheen from being squeezed the Consul-General may have to interfere for their protection—a

measure which would not be likely to ingratiate us with the Porte. Our news from the Soudan is at present satisfactory; affairs there, with regard to ourselves, seem quiet enough, but their appearance may change when the crops are gathered in, and the rise of the Nile will facilitate any fresh aggressive movements which the Dervishes may feel disposed to make.

You would enjoy the charming weather we are having. . . . Your mind must be occupied, however, with far more important matters just now than the weather, for it is hardly too much to say that the fate of the Empire is trembling in the balance. The infatuation about Gladstone is wonderful, and we shall all rue, I am afraid, the effects of this feeling. . . .—Yours very sincerely, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Niece, Mrs. Frank Pownall

CAIRO, *July* 4, 1886.

MY DEAR HELEN,—It is very disappointing not being able to return home, but in reply to my application to do so I had such an appeal made to me to remain on in command that it was quite impossible for me not to do so—I really had no option. I don't think that there were sufficient grounds for asking me to remain; this command must fall vacant sooner or later, and my successor might just as well be appointed now. If they delay doing so till Egypt and the Soudan are settled down they will have to wait a long time. Cairo is becoming quite deserted; everyone who can is gone or going for the summer, and I shall very soon feel like an owl in the desert. . . . I have been at the opening of one or two mummies lately, which was very interesting. Rameses II. (Sesostris), the Pharaoh at the time of Moses' birth, was one of those recently opened; he is now lying under a glass case wonderfully preserved, the features perfectly distinct, and of a type quite different from anything now to be seen in Egypt or the Soudan—the nose very remarkable, not unlike that of

the Duke of Wellington, a rather receding chin, and prominent cheek bones (though that must be expected from the age of the mummy, as well as that of the King himself). You may imagine what an interest it is to see the actual features of so historical a character. His father, Sete I., whose sarcophagus is in Sir John Soane's Museum, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, is, if anything, in better preservation ; he also lies well preserved under a glass case. A third mummy, being in a woman's coffin of about the same date, was supposed to be that of Nefert, the daughter of Pharaoh, who found Moses, but when the coffin was opened and the mummy unrolled, it turned out to be a man, Rameses III., a rather improper proceeding you will say, and about which perhaps the less said the better ; he also lies under a glass case, but without any expression of shame at having been discovered where he was. I have got some excellent photographs of these kings, which I will send home by an early opportunity, as well as some dried flowers found lying upon the mummies ; they are the flowers of a species of willow or of the lotus. The excavation of the Sphinx is going on apace, but the result is very unsatisfactory ; they have got down to the animal's paws, between which is an altar, but the body of the animal now disclosed shows no sign of sculpture ; the legs certainly are there, but the breast of the animal is entirely undelineated. My first impression was that of disappointment, accompanied by the wish that the sands might cover up the excavations again. . . . Yours affectionately, FREDK. STEPHENSON.

To his Sister

CAIRO, *August* 1, 1886.

My DEAR MINNY,— . . . We are now looking forward to the approaching visit of the Duke of Edinburgh,[34] with the Mediterranean squadron, which will consist of about eight ironclads and two frigates, which will make a good show. The French are doing all they can

to excite, through their newspapers, an unfriendly display of feeling against H.R.H., but I don't imagine that they will succeed to any great extent ; their jealousy of such a display of English influence excites their animosity, and is just what might be expected from them. I am going down to Ramleh on Tuesday to stay with a wealthy Greek for about ten days, who has always been very friendly to the English, and to whom, in return for some valuable assistance he rendered us in 1882, the Queen has awarded the K.C.M.G., so that, to his great delight, he is now styled Sir Constantine ——. Affairs are going on satisfactorily, both upon the Upper Nile and at Suakin, and judging from appearances the hostility of the Soudanese seems to be taking a favourable turn. . . . I hope you will get William to show you the photographs I lately sent him . . . the mummy, Sete I., with those of several other kings, had been removed hundreds of years ago from their original resting-places to preserve them from destruction at the time of some invasion of Egypt, and had been reburied together in one large pit, which was discovered a very few years ago.

To his Niece, Susan Hamilton Stephenson

CAIRO, *September 27*, 1886.

MY DEAR SUSY,—I have been indulging in a little holiday myself. There were three or four occasions which called for my going to Alexandria, so I went for the first, which was that of the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince George [35] with the fleet, and stayed till after the last, which was that of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught passing through the Canal on their way to India. This embraced, from first to last, about six weeks, and a very pleasant time I had, which did me a great deal of good. I was staying with a wealthy Greek merchant of Ramleh, about 6 miles out of Alexandria. He gave his house and carriages entirely up to me, and was more kind and hospitable than I can say.

The fleet, which consisted of eleven vessels in all, would have made a good show if it could have come into harbour, but the draught of water of the ironclads compelled them to remain outside the breakwater ; so that hardly anybody saw them. Young Prince George is a promising officer ; he has simple, unpretending manners, and made himself much liked. In fact, all the Royalty who have been here have left very agreeable impressions. The Duke and Duchess of Connaught [38] dined with us on board our steamer at Port Said, and we had a very pleasant evening. They will pass through the Canal again next May on their return to England for the Jubilee. Our friends the Dervishes are collecting at Dongola with the view of an advance upon Egypt, but I believe their numbers to be much exaggerated, and I don't as yet anticipate anything very serious. If we can tide over this winter without any serious trouble with the Soudanese, the English force here will be reduced, and the defence of the frontier left to the Egyptian army ; but I don't think, for all that, that there is any chance of our giving up our occupation of Egypt. I think we shall have a great number of visitors out here this winter, and Messrs. Cook & Son are bringing out four new and very comfortable steamers for the benefit of travellers up the Nile.

To his Brother

ASSOUAN, *October* 13, 1886.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—I have come up the Nile again, as you will see by above ; this seems likely to be an annual occupation, to which I see no immediate end, though I suppose one will come in due time. I am now making an inspection tour, and shall leave in about three days for Korosko and Halfa, returning to Cairo for the present, should I find the Dervishes are not making an immediate advance ; but I shall probably have to come up here again, for there is a fair prospect of another winter campaign. In making the

necessary preparations my hands are tied to no small extent by considerations both political and financial, for the Government at home are very averse to my sending any English troops at all beyond Assouan. They fear public opinion, which may interpret such a move as implying an intention to go on ultimately to Dongola. I am therefore restricted, except in a case of extreme urgency, to garrisoning both Halfa and Korosko with nothing but Egyptian troops, and these will have to stand the attack of the Dervishes without the immediate support of British troops : it is to be hoped that they will but be steady, for we have made Halfa very strong, and they ought to find no difficulty in holding it. In the meantime the English force in Egypt has been reduced very low, and a large portion of the Egyptian army are newly raised corps ; but I have an excellent set of officers, and we shall do very well. The defence of this frontier is, however, a task of some little anxiety, because if the enemy should penetrate it, there is not only the fear of alarm spreading amongst a timid and helpless population, but also there are the foreign communities to be taken into account, who would be up in arms at the very idea that they were running any risk, and some of whom would only be too glad of an excuse to still further abuse the English. The weather has now become very bearable even up here, and the health of the troops is improving accordingly. The financial difficulties of the Government in connection with Egypt are very great ; for they will have to pay all excess over the military budget for the Egyptian army for this year ; and as our own has also been exceeded, the fear is that unless the army estimates for the next year are very moderate, there may be an outcry in Parliament for our withdrawal from Egypt altogether. Then, again, the Egyptian Government will have to satisfy the International Commission by the 1st April next that their army budget can be met by Egyptian resources. Their army has had to be considerably increased of late

to meet the heavy additional duties thrown upon it by the defence of the frontier and Suakin. Economy is therefore strictly the order of the day for both armies, the responsibility of which falls upon my shoulders. I have come in for the cold fit: if only two or three of those millions were forthcoming which have been so shamefully squandered by the mismanagement of Gladstone's Government ever since I have been out here! There are, however, causes for far greater anxieties in Eastern Europe, but I cannot help thinking that the Czar will content himself with what he can gain by carrying the game of bullying to the extreme without actually going to war; the game, however, is a dangerous one and may land him in difficulties, which he will be unable to get clear of without war.

To his Sister

CAIRO, *November* 8, 1886.

MY DEAR MINNY,— . . . Last night I went to an entertainment which would have amused you—a regular Arab dinner given by a certain Sheikh, a man of very old family and great influence. He very good-naturedly supplied us with knives, forks, and spoons, so that we had not to eat and pull the contents of the dishes with our fingers—a very disgusting performance. We had fourteen different dishes, all well cooked, and many of them very palatable. Arab music was played during the hour we had to sit before dinner, smoking and drinking coffee. Our host, according to Arab custom, did not sit at table with us, but moved about seeing that we were all attended to—in short, waiting upon us. The idea is a pretty one, savouring of genuine hospitality, primitive, one might almost say poetic. I can't say that, in spite of the goodness of the dinner, I managed to satisfy hunger; the ingredients of the dishes, although good, were strange to the European palate. The house is thoroughly Oriental, very handsome, and possessing the prettiest courtyard I have

ever seen. We sat down about half a dozen English and as many Arabs and Turks.

CAIRO, *December* 6, 1886.—The Dervishes ran away the other day like lamplighters when the Halfa garrison went out at them, and they are, I believe, still retreating; the farther they go the greater chance of our seeing each other again in the spring or early summer. I must have a change this next hot season, even if I don't come away altogether. My present impression is that the Dervishes will not come back again, and that their hostile intentions have collapsed, for this time at all events.

CAIRO, *February* 28, 1887.— . . . I have been interesting myself very much lately in trying to get into position again a beautiful colossal statue of Rameses II., the Pharaoh of Moses, which has been lying on its face in the mud in a hole for centuries; it is uncertain when it was thrown down, whether by the Persians in the time of Cambyses, or by the Romans (which I don't think), or at a later date. It is at Memphis, and was made a present to the British nation by Mehemet Ali, but it has been treated with not only indifference but neglect, rather I think to our discredit, for the statue is a beautiful one and full of interest. But he is a troublesome gentleman to move, for he measures about 42 feet, and is calculated to weigh 100 tons. By means of very powerful levers we have been able already to raise him a few feet from the ground, sufficient to enable us to sit down underneath and get a fairly good view of his face. I want to have him raised erect and placed upon a good solid foundation, with a wall or buttress at the back to support him; unfortunately, this will cost about £600, and I am at my wits' ends to know where to get it. One liberal individual has given me £50 with the promise of another £50 if wanted, but that is all the substantial encouragement I have received, and I am beginning to

fear that for lack of means I shall have to lower him again to his former mud, never perhaps to leave it again. It will be a pity, and also a great disappointment to me, for I have had this project in my mind ever since I came out here. . . . —— —— is here on a mission (!) with two or three other ladies, and what on earth they contemplate is more than I can say. Of all things to avoid in this country is proselytising; it does an infinity of mischief to make even the attempt, and it never gets beyond that. I have rather a horror of this sort of mission work (would-be) carried on by ladies in this part of the world. There are, however, two excellent old ladies here, the Miss Whateleys, daughters of the celebrated Archbishop of Dublin, who now have been out here doing real good for the last twelve years in carrying on a school for native children, whom they educate in useful learning; but no interference with religious subjects takes place, and that is one great source of its success. . . .

CAIRO, *Easter Monday*, 1887.—I leave on the 25th of this month by Marseilles, and shall be with you about the 21st.

CAIRO, *September* 5, 1887.—Since returning to Cairo I have been back again to Alexandria to meet [*sic*] a pleasant invitation which some Greek friends of mine gave me for an annual Fête which they give among themselves. It began at 5 p.m., and I did not get home till two o'clock the next morning, which was more than I bargained for. The scene of the Fête took place almost within sight of the Bay of Aboukir, where Nelson fought his famous battle of the Nile, one of the finest exploits in history, and where our troops landed three years later—also a fine exploit—to fight the battle of Alexandria. I am very fond of all that ground, and any Englishman ought to be proud of the deeds performed in those parts, both by land and sea, by our sailors and soldiers. What they did then

will, I trust, be repeated as nobly by this generation and our posterity, if occasion arises, which it in all probability will before very long. This town is just now a complete desert ; those who were here last winter would not know it again. The large hotel, Shepheard's, which at times holds from 150 guests upwards, has now one solitary inmate. The chief point of interest just now is the Nile, which has been gradually rising for some time and is now nearly at its height ; it is so full this year that there is some anxiety as to its overflowing its banks, so that in order to guard against eventualities, watchmen are placed in certain places along the banks, at about 100 yards apart, to look out day and night for the first appearance of the river overflowing the banks, and to give the alarm, so that the neighbouring inhabitants may be collected and at once repair any breach which the waters may make—the damage and loss which would otherwise ensue would be immense. It won't be many months, my dear Minny, before we meet again ; for my time is up, as I think you know, next May, which is not so very far off. I shall do my best, when I do return, to work my way home through Palestine as far as Damascus, and linger perhaps a little in Italy afterwards.

September 24, 1887.—Many thanks for your letter from Canterbury. The Cathedral is full of historical interest, but I am not at all sure that so far as the beauty of the building is concerned there is not more of that to be seen from the outside, combined with the cloisters and other buildings. The principal historical characters connected with the town are Chaucer, Uriah Heep, and Mary Freeling. With us it is still very hot, and so muggy that I don't feel inclined to take much exertion. The Nile is still rising, but will soon, I think, come to a standstill and then begin to fall. I am much pleased with a very charming novel I am reading—*Jess*, by Haggard, his last and best, very superior to anything

he has written before, containing some really fine writing and good sentiments. I wish more such were written, and less trash in proportion. I am just off for a drive, the most violent kind of exercise I feel disposed to take just now, so good-bye, my dear, for the present.

CAIRO, *October* 10, 1887.—You will see me back again sooner than I expected. The Government contemplate a still further reduction of the English force here, and with it necessarily the staff; my appointment here under these circumstances must cease as a matter of course. My staff and self will therefore leave here before the end of the year. . . . Our friends the Dervishes are on the move again, and are now about 3500 strong within 35 miles of our frontier post at Halfa; they have possibly come there with the object of plunder, but they will find but little to satisfy their wants, for the country they are now in is almost depopulated and devoid of food. They will probably withdraw as soon as their own supplies are exhausted. We have had a trying month during September, hot damp atmosphere, relaxing and depressing, and we still feel it, though it must soon come to an end. I have felt it more than during any month I have been in Egypt.

November 8, 1887.—I sent you a very shabby letter by last mail, but I had a little touch of fever upon me at the time which made me somewhat ill-disposed to letter writing; the fever is gone, and I am nearly all right again.

CAIRO, *December* 12, 1887.—Merely one line to say, don't write to me after the 23rd of this month; a letter posted on that day will reach me, but not after that, as I shall leave here on the 31st, which ought to bring me to you about the middle of January, unless I take Palestine in my way home, which I do not think

I shall. All sorts of farewell dinners in prospect ; one of about 250 people is given to me on Monday. The Khedive gives me one on the 29th, the staff give me another, and there are several private ones besides.

To his Brother

CAIRO, *December* 12, 1887.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—I leave here at the end of this month, probably the 31st. I am sore tempted to take Palestine on my way home, having had a most liberal and hospitable offer made me by Mr. Cook, the Tourist Manager, who has asked me and an A.D.C. to be his guests if I go there, though he will not be present himself, and has instructed his agent to make every possible arrangement for my comfort and convenience. This would be without any expense to me. There are, however, difficulties in the way. In the first place, it is very doubtful whether one can land at Jaffa at this season, owing to the wind ; then the season is very unfavourable for travelling in the Holy Land, owing to the heavy rains. However, I shall see. The prospect of this little trip is too tempting to be set aside in a hurry. In the meantime I shall have a busy time here with farewell dinners. The English and foreign communities give me one next Monday, when about 250 people will be present, including, I understand, H.H.'s Ministers and the different Consuls-General. A big affair entailing—horror of horrors—a speech. On the 24th the staff give me a dinner—another speech ; and on the 29th the Khedive gives me a dinner, about 60 or 70 being present, when in all probability I may have to make a few incoherent remarks in French. I shall not be sorry when it is all over. You can have no idea of the kindness and good feeling shown to me on all hands by English, natives, and foreigners. I wish that you could witness it. I feel that they are really sorry I am going. I am sure you will not think I say this out of swagger or for

any other reason than that I know it will give you pleasure. Our fever epidemic has entirely disappeared, and the bracing winter weather commenced, still with the lovely blue sky which rarely, very rarely, forsakes us. I confess that when I leave Egypt I shall carry away with me many regrets as well as pleasant recollections.

To his Sister

CAIRO, *December* 26, 1887.

MY DEAR MINNY,—I leave here on the 31st, and embark for Marseilles on the 2nd January. I may stay a day or two in Paris, but that is doubtful. If I do not, I ought to be with you by Monday the 9th. The enclosed newspaper contains an account of last Monday's dinner. The card accompanying it gives a list of the guests, and I will tell you who they are when we meet. I also send you a correct copy of Mr. Stanhope's telegram, which was not accurately reported :—

"FROM WAR SECRETARY TO SIR E. BARING.—I am glad to hear that you are doing honour to Sir F. Stephenson on his retirement from his command in Egypt. His services have been marked by conspicuous ability and success, and I have Her Majesty's permission to add that they have been highly appreciated by the Queen."

To his Brother

CAIRO, *December* 26, 1887.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—I send you a copy of a local newspaper containing an account of the farewell dinner given to me last Monday. It was a most successful affair. The reception given to me would have done your heart good to have witnessed ; anything more honourable and gratifying could not have been. All the Consuls-General were present, and numerous members of all nationalities as well. I send you a list of the guests, and have marked the nationalities of the Consuls-

General. Last but not least, nearly all the ladies of our own community were present to hear the speeches. Sir E. Baring made two capital speeches, which were well delivered and well received. They are accurately reported. To my immense surprise and delight, my own speech was well received, and gave much satisfaction to the foreigners. It is not quite correctly reported: one or two omissions and alterations have been made, but nothing of much consequence. The good feeling displayed was warm and genuine. The dinner and waiting were very good, and the large tent in which we dined was the prettiest thing I ever saw. I had a parade last Saturday and said a few words of farewell to the officers and men, and in the evening the staff gave me a dinner—about twenty sat down. To-night the officers of the garrison give me a dinner, and on Thursday I dine with the Khedive. On Saturday the 31st I leave for Suez [*to join*] the P. and O. steamer *Khedive*, which leaves on the 2nd of January.

NOTES TO LETTERS FROM EGYPT

[1] Right Hon. Sir Edward B. Malet, Bart., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., 1837–1908. British Minister Plenipotentiary in Egypt 1882.

[2] Sir Charles Rivers Wilson, b. 1831, K.C.M.G. Finance Minister in Egypt 1875.

[3] Sir Auckland Colvin, Comptroller-General in Egypt 1881–82.

[4] Battle of Tel-el-Kebir, where Wolseley defeated Arabi, September 13, 1882.

[5] Sir Edgar Vincent, b. 1857, K.C.M.G., formerly Lieutenant in the Coldstream Guards. Financial Adviser to the Egyptian Government, and Governor of the Imperial Ottoman Bank at Constantinople.

[6] Mary, daughter of Edward Coxe the historian's brother (1793–1883), married John Clayton Freeling, son of Sir Francis Freeling of the Post Office.

[7] Robert William Hamilton, 1833–1883, Grenadier Guards. Grandson of W. R. Hamilton. See Note 9 to Crimean Letters.

[8] Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, b. 1838, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., etc. etc. etc. Constable of the Tower of London 1911.

[9] Evelyn Baring, Earl of Cromer, b. 1841, P.C., G.C.M.G., K.C.S.I., etc. etc. Agent, Consul-General, and Minister Plenipotentiary in Egypt 1883–1907.

[10] Nubar Pasha, 1825–1899, of Armenian parentage and educated by the Jesuits. Carried through the negotiations for the completion of the Suez Canal under Ismail Pasha. Minister of Foreign Affairs 1866. Held office under Lord Cromer 1884–88 and 1894–96.

[11] Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, Bart., 1843–1911. Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 1881. President Local Government Board 1882–85.

[12] General George Hay Moncrieff, Scots Guards. Son of General Moncrieff referred to in the letters from China.

[13] Captain Moncrieff, R.N. British Consul at Jeddah. Accompanied expedition sent to relieve Tokar; killed in action with 160 Egyptian officers and men.

[14] William Hicks (Hicks Pasha), 1830–1883. Staff officer in the Rohilkund Expedition, served in the Abyssinian War 1867–68.

Anglo-Egyptian General. Defeated and killed at the battle of Kash-gil 1883.

[15] Outrages à la Pièrre. I have searched in vain for some explanation of these words.—H. A. P.

[16] General William Earle, C.B., C.S.I., 1833–1885, Grenadier Guards. Military Secretary to Lord Northbrook, Viceroy of India, 1872–76. Killed at the battle of Kirbekan, in the Soudan.

[17] Emily Anne, youngest daughter of Rear-Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort, K.C.B., married 1862 the 8th and last Viscount Strangford.

[18] General Valentine Baker (Baker Pasha), 1827–1887. Brother of Sir Samuel White Baker the traveller. Served in the Kaffir War 1852–53, in India and the Crimea. Major-General in the Turkish Army 1877.

[19] Clifford Lloyd was sent to Egypt in 1883 to reorganise the Department of the Interior. Owing to continued friction with Nubar Pasha and a certain unfitness for working with Orientals, he resigned his post in 1884.

[20] Sir Colin Campbell Scott-Moncrieff, K.C.S.I., K.C.M.G., etc., b. 1836. Served in the Oudh campaign 1858–59. Under-Secretary Public Works Ministry of Egypt 1883.

[21] Charles George Gordon, 1833–1885. Crimea 1855, China 1860, and in command of a Chinese force put down the Taiping rebels. Governor of Egyptian Equatorial Provinces 1873. Defended Khartoum for some months in 1884, but was treacherously killed two days before the relieving force reached him.

[22] Sir Herbert Stewart, son of the Rev. John Stewart, rector of Sparshott, in Hampshire. Was wounded at the battle of Abu Klea, and subsequently died from the effects of his wounds 1885.

[23] Early in May 1884 Great Britain invited the other Great Powers of Europe to a Conference to consider the government of Egypt and its financial position. After some hesitation and delay, the invitation was accepted in June, and on the 28th of that month the Conference met for the first time in London under the Presidency of Lord Granville. It dragged on without definite result, and on August 4, Mr. Gladstone as Prime Minister had to announce to the House of Commons that it had broken down.

[24] Garnet, Joseph, Viscount Wolseley, 1833–1913. Field-Marshal, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army 1895–1900.

[25] George, Duke of Cambridge, 1819–1904.

[26] General Sir Edmund Whitmore, Military Secretary at the Horse Guards at that date.

[27] Sir Thomas George Baring, Earl of Northbrook, G.C.S.I., P.C., D.C.L., etc. etc., 1826–1904. Secretary of State for War 1883. Viceroy of India 1872–76.

[28] General Sir Arthur James Fremantle, K.C.M.G., Coldstream Guards, b. 1835. Governor of Malta.

[29] A note from the recipient of this letter says, " John—Sparshott

—no, he was not," referring of course to the omitted Christian name, the living, and the canonry.

[30] Osman Digna. Slave dealer and leader of Soudan Dervishes. Made Governor of the Soudan by the Mahdi in 1883. Victorious at Sinkat and El Deb. Defeated by Anglo-Egyptian troops under General Graham 1884.

[31] Right Hon. Sir Henry Brackenbury, K.C.B., etc. etc., b. 1837, Indian Mutiny 1857–58. Soudan 1884–85.

[32] Lieutenant-General Sir Gerald Graham, V.C., G.C.B., etc., 1831–1899.

[33] Right Hon. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, G.C.B., etc., 1830–1908. High Commissioner in Egypt 1886–87.

[34] Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh and Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, second son of Queen Victoria, 1844–1900.

[35] H.M. George v.

[36] Arthur, Duke of Connaught, third son of Queen Victoria, b. 1850.

APPENDIX I

SOME ACCOUNT OF MARY AND CHARLOTTE STEPHENSON (1771–1850; 1772–1853), SISTERS OF SIR BENJAMIN STEPHENSON, WRITTEN BY THEIR NIECE, CHARLOTTE AUGUSTA STEPHENSON

My father's sisters, when I first remember them, were two old ladies most peculiar in their dress and appearance.

Aunt Mary, the eldest, had been pretty in her youth, but that was long past in my time, leaving nothing beyond a pair of bright eyes, which twinkled like those of a small bird, and had almost as much expression in them. Her hair, which had been dark, was represented by a tow wig, whilst her complexion resembled the bloom that you see on a pippin.

Aunt Charlotte was of a rather different type. She never could have had any pretension to good looks, though her figure was better than her sister's, and the expression of her face was bright and clever. The dress of both was peculiar, following no fashion, and seldom composed of new material. They always appeared to be quite satisfied with their attire, and would comment freely upon the dress of other people when it did not suit their ideas.

Their home was in Kensington Palace, where my grandfather (Joseph Stephenson) had apartments, and at his death my aunts succeeded to them and lived in them till they died. I do not believe that either of them were fifty miles away during the whole of their long lives. I have heard Aunt Mary say that she had never seen the sea. She was perfectly satisfied to be without this knowledge, and the education for women in those days was so narrow that unless a girl was naturally clever, or had a thirst for knowledge, there

was nothing to prevent her from growing up to be a narrow-minded, ignorant woman. If you read the memoirs and biographies of the latter end of the eighteenth century, or the beginning of the nineteenth century, you see proofs of the extraordinary ignorance of the women of that period. There were some bright exceptions, such as Miss Burney, Mrs. Delaney, and others who are mentioned in those charming memoirs; but, on the other hand, Horace Walpole gives you many instances in the opposite direction of those ladies who lived in good society and whose ignorance would disgrace the smallest scholar in a National School. He tells you that Lady G., in conversation with Lady T., mentions the Saxons. "The Saxons, my dear?" said the other; "who were they?" "Lord! Madam, did you never read the *History of England*?" "No, my dear; who wrote it?"

Aunt Charlotte, having a thirst for knowledge and being naturally quick and clever, had improved and enlarged her mind by reading, and she could at times be a very agreeable companion. Aunt Mary, on the other hand, having no aspirations nor wish for knowledge, remained all her life what the education of those times made her. But she wished to appear what she was not, and would lay claim to accomplishments and acquirements that were non-existent, and which everybody knew to be so. It was ludicrous to hear her speak of the pictures she had painted, the embroidery she had worked, and other arts and graces of which she was entirely ignorant. Her prejudices and superstitions were numerous. She lived in constant fear of robbers and footpads, was very jealous of her position as an inhabitant of a palace, and made herself very disagreeable to her neighbours by assuming superiority because she and her sister had lived so many years in the same dull rooms. This, in her opinion, gave her a claim to the respect of all Kensington.

The rooms my aunts inhabited were gloomy and dismal—they all looked into courts and had no view beyond them and the windows of rooms opposite; but Aunt Charlotte had obtained permission from the authorities to convert one of these small courts into a garden, and this she had done with great taste and skill. In the centre she had planted a miniature shrubbery, consisting of lilacs and other flowering

shrubs, and round the walls of the enclosure, and underneath the windows of the different rooms, were placed large boxes full of flowers. My aunt was not allowed to move the stones with which the court was paved, so she covered them with these boxes, and in this way changed the ugly and gloomy space into something pleasant and cheerful to the eye.

It used to be a great delight to us children to walk from our home, two miles away in London, pay a visit to my aunts in the old Palace, and then have a game of play in Aunt Charlotte's garden.

There was a strange fascination to us in the place, and the charm remained after I was grown up. My aunts were not especially kind to us; we were not received with much affection when we went to see them, indeed, sometimes we got a regular snubbing, so I do not know why we were fond of going to them. When my dear father walked with us there was reason enough for our enjoyment. He went there very often on Sundays, having business to transact with Princess Sophia, who had apartments in the Palace just opposite those of my aunts, and on those occasions we were always his companions. He would leave us while he paid his visit to the Princess, and then pick us up on his return home.

On these occasions we went through a regular catechism, and every kind of question was put to us concerning our daily life, with the purpose of eliciting information, which children are so proud to give to their elders, of all that went on at home. When this was over we were regaled with certain small buns that were excellent and came from a confectioner at Kensington, Mrs. Smith by name. But good as these buns were, I do not think we valued them so highly as we did Aunt Charlotte's stories. She was first rate in this capacity, and had a way of lowering her voice and dropping her words one by one when she related some tale of horror which wonderfully heightened the effect, and I can feel now the thrill which passed through me as we listened with suspended breath for the *dénouement* of the story.

Sometimes when our youthful nerves were in danger of being too much excited Aunt Charlotte would suddenly stop and either say, "That is all," or turn the finale into a joke. Oh, what a delightful, painful

enjoyment it was to sit huddled together round Aunt Charlotte's knee at the close of a summer day, with the shadows creeping round the room, with doors behind you leading to empty and unfurnished rooms, while she slowly repeated tales of ghosts and mysterious disappearances, always speaking as if she firmly believed them. Then you felt that you dared not turn your head for fear of encountering some form that had silently issued through the closed door and was waiting at the back of your chair! As soon as you moved the spell was broken; but the difficulty was to move and to dispel the charm in which the relater held you. My mother did not approve of these tales of horror, so when she was present my aunt confined herself to moral and polite literature and kept her imagination under control.

I remember one story which began in the most promisingly horrible manner being stopped by my mother's sudden appearance and her giving some sign to Aunt Charlotte to prevent her saying anything more to frighten us, and I have never heard the end of that story to this day. There were some families who had apartments in the Palace, and with whom my aunts were constantly at feud; indeed, they were not very peaceable livers with any one, but these were especially obnoxious to them. All their doings were closely watched, and if any small privilege were granted to them by the Board of Works, such as a little new paint to their walls, or a necessary cupboard put up, it was a source of bitter complaint and would be remembered and talked of for years. Nothing would soothe, no explanation would satisfy—they were aggrieved and were determined to remain so.

My poor father, who had the management of all works connected with the Royal Palaces, would be terribly worried by these complaints. He made every concession in his power, not only for the sake of pleasing his sisters, but because he feared what they might do to annoy and displease their neighbours, who were old friends of his. General Wynyard had apartments close to my aunts. He was greatly attached to my father, and for his sake bore in patient silence the constant attacks and the petty warfare that was carried on by the two irritable old ladies. It was like the stinging of gnats, and though the complaints were

always trifling and absurd they were made the foundation for prolonged and serious quarrelling, and the very name of the aggressor was not to be mentioned in the presence of either of the aunts. There was one terrible altercation that I remember about the door of their kitchen which had been moved, and though the change was rather to their convenience than otherwise, the idea immediately occurred to them that General Wynyard had instigated the act for the sole purpose of annoyance, and the most vehement reproaches were cast upon him, and even the Bible quoted to prove the sin of moving your neighbour's landmark. The General smiled as he repeated this to my mother, and added, "Well, never mind, I can forgive Miss Charlotte more than this for the sake of certain raspberry tarts she used to give me when I was a boy." But though he turned off the subject in this good-natured way to spare my father's feelings, we knew that the constant interference and squabbling that went on was very much felt, and that such close neighbourhood with people who were always seeking an excuse for quarrelling must have been very trying to a peaceably inclined man. One great peculiarity of character in my aunts was their love of mystery. Everything that they did was surrounded with mystery. Things were alluded to, not mentioned, and then a look would pass between the sisters and a warning word, such as "Mary!" or "Charlotte!" as the case might be, and the speaker was checked with the words vibrating on her lips and pulled herself up directly. They used to make periodical visits to London, simply for the innocent purpose of drawing their dividends from the bank, but these expeditions were spoken of in such ambiguous terms, the day's proceedings were clothed in so much that was cloudy and obscure, that you fancied (at least those who did not know the speakers' ways) that a second Gunpowder Plot was brewing. These days were always closed at our house, where my aunts dined and spent the evening, and Aunt Charlotte, if in an amiable mood, would indulge us with one of her delightful stories. Then when the carriage came to take them back to Kensington Palace at night there were great precautions to be taken for safety on the long and perilous journey. The carriage lamps were carefully lighted, and the coachman was warned to look out on

every side in case of an attack from footpads or other evil persons who might have discovered the morning's expedition to the bank. On one of these occasions a mischievous cousin, who lived with us and who delighted to tease, frightened them so much with his accounts of the perils of the road between London and Kensington that the aunts entreated he would accompany them back, armed with my father's pistols.

In spite, however, of their terror, these gala days were very much enjoyed by both. A carriage was hired for the whole day, and their best gowns and bonnets were put on. This hired carriage my aunts always called a glass coach, because in olden times all carriages were made with only wooden or canvas blinds, and when the improvement of glass windows was introduced they were only used for private conveyances and not for hackney coaches. Therefore my aunts from habit always spoke of their " glass coach," to show that they were not going about in a vulgar hackney conveyance. As to their dress on these occasions, I do not feel that I can do it justice if I attempt a description. It was so complicated and intricate and composed of so many odds and ends that you wondered how the wearers ever got into the different portions of their attire.

The skirts of their dresses were very narrow, and short enough to clearly display prunella shoes and white stockings, the former having wide black sandals. On their shoulders my aunts always wore a kind of pelerine or tippet, and a net ruff round the throat. But their heads—adorned with heavy bunches of hair collected over the forehead and eyes, and surmounted by huge net helmets with massive bows placed exactly in front, looking like a large bird preparing to fly—how are these to be imagined ? They were a sight to fill the childish mind with awe and wonder. These caps were brought with them in a basket when they came to spend the day, and worn at dinner, but no one was permitted to touch them, or to be present at the process of adorning. That was done with closed doors in secret ! The fact was, that both aunts wore rouge, which had been the fashion universally in their day, and which they never discontinued, so that I fancy a slight touch was added at the evening toilette, which process, if a child had been allowed to witness, they would have

silently wondered at, and would have afterwards loudly announced the fact in the course of the evening. My aunts' bonnets, which the caps replaced, were made according to their own peculiar fashion, and were of one standing pattern, only differing in material according to the season. In winter it would be black velvet and in summer white satin. But everything they wore was of the largest type and size, so that you could have made half a dozen articles out of the one. Aunt Mary's muff looked like the skin of a whole bear, and on the outside she used to pin a large white bow, so that she might distinguish one side from the other and always be able to place the same next her. Their parasols were as large as a family umbrella. They were made of green taffeta and were armed with long brass ferules to prevent the silk and whalebone from touching the ground. The veils which they almost always wore would have made a good-sized apron, and so on with everything. One dress that Aunt Mary appeared in on a certain summer's day can never be forgotten while memory lasts. It was hot weather, and we were then living in a house a few miles out of town, which my father had taken for the sake of the large garden and grounds where the children could run about and enjoy fresh air and liberty. Aunt Mary came from Kensington to spend the day, and as she considered Hammersmith quite the country, she had to adapt her dress accordingly, for of course the fashion that suited Kensington High Street would not do for the wilds of Hammersmith. Her attire therefore consisted of a white cambric petticoat, made conveniently short for climbing stiles or walking through long grass, which also gave you a good view of stout prunella shoes with wide sandals and high heels. The upper part of her figure was clothed in a bright green spencer confined round the waist by a broad band, and on her head she wore a straw chimney-pot hat, to which was attached an enormous green veil that floated in the air like a banner. My aunt was constantly waving this veil back with a graceful gesture of her hand, because the brim of the man's hat being very narrow it was constantly falling over her face and interrupting her sight. The parasol with the brass ferule completed the whole costume, and the effect was certainly very funny. But in spite of all their peculiarities and oddities, to say nothing of their

very uncertain tempers, they had some warm and staunch friends.

Aunt Mary was still more peculiar in her ways than Aunt Charlotte ; she had a strange fancy that when she was in bed and asleep " things " might fall into her mouth. What " things " she meant to imply I do not know, but once, on being asked, she answered that " pins might drop from the top of the bed, and as she always lay on her back with her mouth open they might fall down her throat." To obviate this she could either have adopted the plan of shutting her mouth or of sleeping on her side, but Aunt Mary preferred her own method, which was to tie a large handkerchief over her mouth just under her nose.

APPENDIX II

THE ROMANTIC STORY OF MRS. GEORGE COXE (1753–1843), TOLD BY HER GREAT-NIECE, CHARLOTTE AUGUSTA STEPHENSON

When I was young I used to be staying a good deal with an uncle [*really great-uncle, as he was the brother of the writer's maternal grandmother, Lady Rivers*] and aunt in the country [*Twyford, near Winchester, in which town was the church he served*]. My uncle was a clergyman, and still did duty in a moderate degree, but the living he held being some distance from his residence he kept a curate to do the work of the parish, doing little more himself than to perform the service in his church on Sundays. His age and previous hard work entitled him, he thought, to the indulgence of rest at the end of a long life. He had held a curacy in Ireland when he was a young man, which was no sinecure, and subsequently was appointed chaplain to the gaol at Lincoln, a post which required great energy and industry; but I cannot say that my uncle possessed either of these qualities—he was not active in his habits nor fond of exertion in any way, and indulged himself in the *dolce far niente* till it became a confirmed and quite a second nature of mooning and dawdling. With all this he was good and kind and most generous, and you loved without exactly respecting him, feeling towards him as you would to a child who wants to be taken care of and protected.

The house he had chosen when he took possession of the living was of moderate size and modest appearance, but there was a good large garden at the back, and beyond this two paddocks, with a bright rippling stream running through them, crossed by a rustic bridge. At the extreme end of these paddocks my uncle had built himself an arbour. It was just large enough to hold two people, and here he would sit,

quite alone, summer and winter, wrapped up in his old cloak and meditating.

Not a sound could be heard in this secluded little nook except the rustling of the leaves and twittering of the birds in summer, or the soothing ripple of the little stream in winter. My uncle's dislike of all noise was morbid and excessive, and he gave way to this fancy, to the inconvenience of everyone about him. All the room doors in the house were kept open with weights to prevent the possibility of a bang ; no clocks were allowed to strike ; the servants moved about shod in list shoes, and the very cocks and hens in the neighbourhood were warned not to crow and cackle. If a stray cock happened to crow within hearing of his study, my uncle would speak of it in the most plaintive tones, as if the creature was perfectly aware of the distress he caused, and crowed on purpose to annoy him. It was very funny at such times to hear how he would describe himself as the most unfortunate being upon earth, and, though he was in reality a very tender-hearted man and would not hurt a fly, to hear how he would propose the most horrible tortures for the unconscious bird.

My aunt was a person of very different character. She was originally possessed of a strong mind and with plenty of good sense, but early trouble and great sorrow had weakened the one and nearly destroyed the other.

She was a widow when my uncle married her, and the story of her youth and first marriage is so romantic and interesting that I will write down all I can remember of it, thinking there are some who may like to read this history of true love enacted so many years ago.

My uncle's wife was the only daughter of a Mr. Hamilton, and at the age of eighteen, when the romance of her life began, was living with her father at Chatham. Her mother, I believe, was dead at this time. I never knew anything about her, nor heard her name mentioned. Chatham was then, as it is now, a garrison town, and Mr. Hamilton had some post connected with the Military which brought him into contact with the officers, and his daughter naturally became acquainted with her father's friends. Amongst these was a Captain Lyon, a young man of good family and very poor. Little more than this is known about

him; his early death prevented him from distinguishing himself in the world, as he would probably have done if he had lived, for I always thought there must have been something more than common in the character of a man who inspired such enduring affection in a woman like my aunt.

Mary Hamilton, at the age of eighteen, was a lovely girl. Hers was not so much the beauty of regular features as of expression, combined with a graceful figure and most charming manners. Even when I can remember her, when she was quite an old woman, she still retained this look of high breeding, the charm of air and manner, and to see her when she occasionally mixed in the small society of the village, where my uncle lived, was to see a queen moving amongst her subjects. She was proud of her fine old Scotch family, but not arrogantly so. Captain Lyon fell in love with her, fascinated, as other men were, both then and later. The attachment was mutual, and though both these young people were as poor as they could be, the marriage was settled, Mr. Hamilton giving his consent, though not his approval. It was the same story, as old as the world. Love was to compensate for everything—food, clothing, house, and servants would come to them, they were sure, and if not, all would be right as long as they were together. They were married, and for a short time—alas! for a very short time—were as happy as possible. Then came the blow. War had just been declared with America, and troops were being sent out fast; amongst them Captain Lyon's regiment received orders for foreign service.

His bride determined to go with him. In those days a troopship was a terrible place, and it was no trifling proof of affection on her part to forgo all the comforts of her home and to launch herself upon the new and strange life before her. But she never hesitated, and bravely accompanied her husband without even a servant to help her. Anything was better than to be parted from him. How the scene had changed from all she had pictured to herself, and how it was to change still more till she came to think that all the discomforts of a troopship were bliss compared with what she had afterwards to endure! Romance was all laid low in the stern realities of her present position.

When the troops landed in America Captain Lyon

received orders to march at once with his men to Bunkers Hill. It did not seem a wise thing to march men just off from a long voyage to the battlefield, and it turned out afterwards that this was a mistake and was never intended by the military authorities, so it made the after consequences still more sad. My poor aunt was thus left alone in a strange country to find her way as she could to rest and shelter. The action of Bunkers Hill had commenced when Captain Lyon and his detachment landed, and the only shelter my aunt could find was a house within earshot of the battlefield. In her own words she described her terrible position. "I closed the shutters of the only room I was able to obtain to deaden the horrible noise of the firing, and then kneeling on the floor I buried my head under the cushions of a sofa to try and shut out both sight and sound." Can anything be imagined more desolate and sad than the position of this young creature, scarcely more than a child in years, left alone in a strange country, in delicate health, as she then was, whilst her dearly loved husband was perhaps dead or dying within reach of her hand!

She never saw him again. Captain Lyon was one of the first who fell in that action, and what agony of mind he must have endured, if he had power or time to think, when he remembered the position in which he had left his wife! No one can tell this; there is but one evidence of the poor fellow's feelings, which was only known to her when she was nearly past all feeling herself.

After the battle of Bunkers Hill my aunt had no alternative but to return to England. The same ship that took her out a blooming happy bride now received her back, a broken-hearted widow. It was in this ship, in the midst of a storm, that her only child, a son, was born. As soon as she could, after leaving the ship, my aunt, acting upon advice, offered herself as nurse to one of the Royal princes. In those days it was not thought derogatory to a lady to fill the post of attendant to a member of the Royal Family. My aunt, however, did not obtain the post, she was thought to be not old enough and probably too good looking; but her applying for the place brought her under the Queen's (Charlotte) notice, and her cause was further advanced by Sir Charles Stewart, who was a connection of Mr. Hamilton's. His influence and exertions procured a

pension for Captain Lyon's widow, and a promise from the Queen that she would provide for the education of his son, and when the proper time arrived, if his inclination should point to the army, a commission was to be given him. Young Lyon went to Hanover when quite a child and was educated there with the young princes, George III.'s sons. The Duke of Cambridge became much attached to him, and was his fast friend to the end of his life. My aunt accompanied her son to Hanover, and lived there with him till he entered the army. He obtained a commission in the 13th Foot, and his first experience of military life and acquaintance with war and all its horrors was on board Lord Howe's ship, in the action of the 1st June 1794. He was then a lad of eighteen, and his regiment had been drafted into the ship to serve as marines. I remember his speaking of this incident one day at my father's table. He had then risen to a high position in the army, a K.C.B., having seen plenty of service, but he was so shy and diffident that it was seldom he could be induced to speak of himself. Upon this occasion he was led on by my father, of whom he was very fond, and after describing the whole scene of the action with great spirit and animation, someone present asked him what he felt when he found himself (such a lad as he was) in the midst of a terrible sea fight? He answered very quietly, "I will tell you. When the look-out men called out, 'The enemy are in sight,' I went below and was as sick as ever I was in my life." While her son was pursuing a more active life, my aunt wandered about from place to place, and seems to have had no relations or friends to cheer her loneliness, and at last came to Bath, where her connection with my family began. Bath was at that time a most fashionable watering-place. All the world went there—amongst them were my two uncles, both in the prime of life and both clergymen. Both of them became attached to the interesting widow, both made her an offer of marriage, and she accepted the younger of the two, and never had reason to repent her decision. She lived happily with my uncle, who proved a most kind and generous friend to his stepson.

Quite at the latter end of my aunt's life, and when her mind had become prematurely weakened, the sorrows and trials of her early life were all revived. She was sitting one day in her quiet drawing-room, and an old

friend with her, when a parcel was brought to her by a servant. It looked as if it came from a distance, and was directed to Mrs. Lyon in the first instance, and then had been redirected in another hand to her present name and address. My aunt opened it with trembling fingers and found inside, carefully secured, a picture—a portrait of herself. It was a lovely miniature, painted when she was in the bloom of her youth and happiness. The likeness had been taken for her first husband before they were married. It was her gift, and with her own hands she had fastened it round his neck, where he vowed it should always remain. He had worn it ever since. It was near his heart as he marched to action, and as he lay dying on the ground at Bunkers Hill the last words he spoke were to entreat a friend who was near him to take the miniature from his breast when he was dead, and give it to his wife. Strange to say, the friend to whom the poor fellow made this request betrayed his trust. A letter accompanied the parcel from the executors of this gentleman, mentioning how it had occurred. He was a brother officer of Captain Lyon's, and had also known Mr. Hamilton and his daughter at Chatham. He had become deeply attached to her, though his friend carried off the prize, so when this living likeness of the woman he loved fell thus unexpectedly into his hands he could not resist the temptation of keeping it, and the miniature remained in his possession till his death, when it was found and restored to Mrs. Lyon. The shock of receiving this memento of the past was terrible on my aunt, and had the effect of shaking her mind still more. It was a cruel act of the friend to keep back this dying message, and for the sake of his own selfish gratification to deprive the wife of her last and only consolation. My aunt never recovered from this shock. After the first few days of excited feeling upon the reception of the miniature, her mind became still more weakened and she sank gradually into a state of complete childishness. She lived to be past eighty. Her days were spent in harmless amusement, and she was perfectly unconscious of the presence of everyone about her. My uncle was the only person she recognised to the last. His presence would always rouse her from her abstraction, and she would look at him with pleasure, sometimes with a sweet smile breaking over her face, but she never cared to talk to

him, and after the first moment would drop back to her deep brooding. He procured a companion for her, who watched over her with great care and kindness, but it was sad to see such a mind in ruins and to hear the language of an infant uttered by lips that had been used to speak all that was clever and refined. So when the end came at last, and all her troubles and sorrows were laid at rest, let us humbly trust that the blessing of the change was as great for her as it was a comforting assurance to the many who loved and admired her.

INDEX

Achmet, mosque of, its huge pillars, 78.
Alexandria, visit to, 307.
Alma, battle of, 101, 104.
Arab dinner, 350.
Army, spirit of the, in Crimea, 81, 107, 113, 120; too small, 111.
Arrow, the, 193.
Ashburnham, General, 175.
Ava, P. & O. s.s., Lord Elgin lives on the, 185; dinner on the, 187.

Baker, Pasha, visit to Pyramids, 292; his difficulties, 310; great confidence in, 316; failure, 317.
Balaclava, taken, 104; letters from, 101, 102, 128, 130–142; life in hut, 123; railway from, 129; improved appearance of, 132.
Banca, Isle of, wreck on, 163, 172; life on, 177.
Baraguay d'Hilliers' estimate of French forces, 76.
Baring, 304; Gordon should consult, 313; doubts return of, 338; *see* Cromer.
Bashi-Bazouks, first seen, 73; described, 75.
Beaconsfield, Lord, letter from, 17; Sir W. Stephenson's work with, 18.
Bees, strange work of, 297.
Ben, origin of nickname, 31.
Bentinck, General, 73; meets Omar Pasha, 88, 89.
Bolton Row, home of Sir W. H. Stephenson, 12, 14.
Brackenbury, Sir H., 334.
Braves, first mentioned, 199; encounter with, 203, 214; described, 219; collapse of, 236.
Brown, Sir G., first mentioned, 69; sails for Varna, 81.
Bull, John, blame thrown on, 147.
Burgoyne, Sir John, 68.

Cairo, arrival and reception at, 287; house in, 289; citadel of, 290; mosques and churches in, 296; great function in, 300; prospect of retiring from, 305; uneasiness in, 344.
Cambridge, Duke of, extracts from letters from, 40, 41, 42; Crimean command, 73; kindness of, 85; extracts from letters of, 325.
Campbell, Sir Colin, 73.
Canada, extracts from letters, 34, 35; life there, 35, 36.
Canning, Lord, 185; troops for China, 190, 192.
Canrobert, General, praise of Rifle Brigade, 114; makes misleading statements, 128; frustrates expedition to Kertch, 139.
Canton, capture of, 196; opinion of, 207.
Cape Town, 170.
Caryote Jews, 157.
Cats as food, 231.
Chambers, Captain of *Transit*, 165; retains command, 166; praise of, 167; trial, 180.
Chestnuts, the, 18.
China, letters, 165–276; Great Wall of, 252.
Chinese, 179, 182; funerals, 188; religion, 188; policy, 199; tea, 247; garrison, 267; trickery, 268; tails, 209, 234; officials taken prisoners, 210; impertinence, 222; dilatoriness, 229; desert Shanghai, 260; cruelty to prisoners, 271.
Cholera in Egypt, 41; in Crimea, 93; losses from, 96; in Egypt, 298, 308.
Clay, Frederic, early compositions, 14.
Clifford, Major, 182, 194.
Colvin, Sir A., 298.
Conference at Vienna, 133, 134, 137. of Great Powers, 321.
Cook, Thomas, & Son, 301; steamers of, 324; liberal offer of, 355.
Coxe, Rev. George, 250.
Crealock, Major, draws portrait of Yeh, 201.

Crimea letters, 71–157 ; battles in, Alma, 101 ; Inkerman, 107, 115 ; siege of Sebastopol, 105, 112, 118, 133 ; charm of scenery, 72, 78, 86, 88, 92 ; good farming country, 86 ; flowers and climate, 141.
Cromer, Lord, extracts from letters of, 61 ; letter to the *Times*, 61 ; *see* Baring.

Dannenberg, 120.
Dawkins, Colonel, incident of, 37.
Dent, Mr., hospitality of, 233, 257, 274.
Dervishes, collect forces, 348 ; run away, 351.
Digna, Osman, camp bombarded, 333 ; source of trouble, 337.
Dilke, Sir Charles, reference to speech by, 305, 315.
Dinners, farewell, 355.
Dobrutska, Russians dying there, 82 ; French go there, 95 ; unhealthiness of, 95.
Durham, Bishop of, 178 ; death of, 245.

Earle, General, 287 ; is set aside, 326 ; route he takes, 330 ; expects a fight, 332 ; death of, 334.
Edinburgh, Duke of, visits Egypt, 346, 347.
Egerton, Colonel, 136.
Egypt, letters from, 287–357 ; visit to, 47 ; letter, state of, 49.
Electric telegraph, a novelty, 138.
Elgin, Earl of, directs troops to India, 175 ; sends Ultimatum to Chinese, 193 ; meets Chinese Commissioners, 200 ; goes north, 205 ; Hong Kong merchants dissatisfied with, 206 ; excellent work of, 237 ; leaves for England, 239.
England, Sir Richard, 121.
Erroll, Lady, 73.

Fan, universal use of, 247.
Fat-shan, importance of, 211 ; visit to, 237 ; revisits, 248.
Fever in China, 232, 240, 248.
Finance in Egypt, 302, 304, 321.
France, trouble with, 302.
Freeling, Mrs. Clayton, death of, 303 ; classed with Chaucer and Uriah Heep, 353.
Fremantle, Sir Arthur, 332.
French, blamed for delay, 84 ; friendly relations with, 115, 137 ; Consul's wife, dress of, 207 ; delay again, 260 ; wishes them out of China, 262 ; desire to regain influence, 305 ; intrigues attributed to them, 321.

Garden, Khedive's, 290.
George, Prince, visits Egypt, 347.
Giffard, Captain H., bad news of, 79 ; death, 87 ; praise of, 87.
Mrs. H., visits her husband, 70 ; goes to Odessa, 83 ; noble conduct, 84, 87.
Giniss, no clasp for, 43 ; Duke of Cambridge congratulates, 42 ; battle of, 285, 342.
Gladstone, W. E., letter from, 15 ; Sir W. Stephenson's work with, 18.
Gordon, General Charles, in the *Transit*, 163 ; arrives in Egypt, 313 ; described, 314 ; letter from, 317 ; in difficulties, 319 ; no news of, 324 ; death, 333.
Government blamed in Crimea, 131 ; in China, 243 ; in Egypt, 341, 335.
Graham, Sir Gerald, 318, 334.
Grant, Sir Hope, extract from diary, 32 ; arrives Hong Kong, 254 ; character, 255, 257 ; serious views, 262.
Greek fête, 352.
Grenfell, F.M. Lord, at Giniss, 44 ; preface to Egyptian letters, 281.
Gros, Baron, 193.
Guns, size of, 118, 132 ; long range, 256.

Hackett, Lieutenant, murder of, 198.
Hamilton, Sir F., letter from, 30 ; at Inkerman, 107.
Robert William, at Inkerman, 107 ; sorrow at death of, 303.
Walter Kerr, Bishop of Salisbury, 71.
William Richard, message to, 71 ; death, 245.
Hampton Court Palace, apartments given to Lady Stephenson, 83.
Hartington, Lord, extracts from letters of, 39, 40 ; Sir F. Stephenson's letter to him, 40 ; speech in House of Commons, 42.
Heliopolis, fine monument at, 297 ; strange work of bees there, 297.
"Heros," 109.
Hicks, Pasha, 306, 341.
Himalaya, unexpected cruise in the, 169.
Hong Kong, description of, 181 ; still young, 227.

Hope, Admiral Sir J., 239, 240.
Horse Guards, complaint of the, 69.
Hunter, Sir Archibald, review given by, 47, 53.
Hurricane off St. Paul's, 173.
Hussein, Pasha, 290.

India, mutiny, 175; troops directed there, 183; China neglected for, 189.
Inkerman, battle of, 107, 112, 115; surprised at, 107; losses at, 110; doubtful subject for rejoicing, 112; reason given for surprise, 126.
Inland Revenue, Board of, 15.

Japan, trouble anticipated with, 275.
Jones, Admiral, renewed acquaintance with, 242.

Keppel, Admiral Sir H., loss of H.M.S. *Raleigh*, 171; plucky action, 237.
Kertch expedition, 138; frustrated, 139; taken, 140; result of success, 142.
Khartoum route, 39, 283, 326 (*see* Suakin-Berber); fall of, 333.
Khedive, visits to, 289, 294; garden of, 290; insecurity of, 312; Gordon wishes not to meet, 313; Government dictates to, 320.
Kidnapping, abominable trade, 251.
Kitchener, F.M. Lord, 39, 51.
Kreli, Kaffir chief, 170; his ruse, 171.

Labuan, Bishop of, 178.
Leslie, Henry, small beginnings of famous choir, 59.
Lindsay, Captain Robert, early friendship, 30; *see* Lord Wantage.
Lindsay, Lady Jane, visit to Egypt, 47; appreciation of Sir F. Stephenson, 48.
Liprandi, General, 120.
Lloyd, Clifford, and opinion of, 311; leaves Egypt, 322.
Loch, Mr., taken prisoner by Chinese, 270; ill-treated, 271.
Locusts, swarm of, 98.
Lowe, Robert, Sir W. Stephenson's work with, 18.
Lüders, General, review for, 157.

Macao, delights of, 241.
Mahdi, success of, 308; answer to his threat, 310; a little backshish, 313; hope of alienating his friends, 316; Gordon doubts his going north, 318; determined opposition, 331; death, 337.
Malakoff Tower, 142; commanding position of, 145.
Malet, Sir Ed., 297.
Malta, stay in, 67, 70.
Mamelon, capture of the, 142.
Markland, Mr., his account of Sir B. C. Stephenson, 2.
Marriage, views on soldier's, 135, 137.
Matapan, Cape, 71.
Mecca, pilgrimage, 300.
Menschikov, 105; Lord Raglan remonstrates with, 116.
Military secretaryship, 30; appointment, 147; disappointed of, 150.
Missions, views on, 352.
Mitchell, 107; death of, 122.
Moncrieff, General, China, 201; good nature, 208.
General George Hay, 306.
Captain R. N., death of, 306.
Montauban, General, arrival of, 254; final arrangements with, 258.
Mummies, 345.

Nachinov, General, 105.
Nantow, expedition against, 227.
Napoleon III. visits England, 139; suspicions of, 259.
Nasmyth, Lieutenant, 84; employed by Lord Raglan, 97.
Nazli, Princess, 289, 316.
Nightingale, Florence, letter about, to Lady Wantage, 63.
Northbrook, Earl of, returns to Cairo, 328; favours idea of the Sultan in the Soudan, 338.
Nubar, Pasha, first meeting with, 289; friend of England, 311; friendly talk with, 312; old methods, 322.

Oliphant, Laurence, 206; book on Japan, 257.
Omar, Pasha, first mentioned, 80; provides baggage animals, 82; first meeting with, 89; opinion of British cavalry, 90; reviews troops, 90; lands at Eupatoria, 119; reason of being in Crimea, 119.
Opium shops, visit to, 180; revenue from, 180.
Osman Digna, 284, 334; possible source of trouble, 337.

Parkes, Sir Harry, sent to Zung-Chow, 269; taken prisoner, 270; ill-treated, 271.
Pasley, Captain Sir Thomas, 148.
Pei-ho forts, unsuccessful attack, 241; taken, 265; *see* Taku.

Pekin, fight before, 270; taken, 271; Summer Palace sacked, 272; funeral of murdered prisoners, 273; peace signed, 273.
Pélissier, General, serious error of, 146.
Politics, views of Sir F. Stephenson, 57; condition, 341.
Pyramids, Gizeh, 292; Sakhara, 301.

Raglan, Lord, expected in Malta, 66; efforts to procure horses, 82; remonstrates with Menschikov, 116; death, 147.
Rameses II., 351.
Redan, the, 145; Pélissier alters hour of attack, 146.
Reid, Sir W., 68.
Religious views of Sir B. C. S., 4; of Sir W. H. S., 12; of Sir F., 58.
Rokeby, Lord, 129.
Romilly, Colonel, xii; A.D.C., 38.
Rowe, pseudonym of Charlie Stephenson, 14.
Russians, poor opinion of, 107, 112; severe losses, 115; cruelty, 116; kindness to prisoners, 129; increasing influence at Pekin, 244; rumours of war with, 335; dangerous game, 350.

Salisbury, Bishop of, appointment of, 71.
Scott-Moncrieff, Colonel, 312.
Scutari, Camp, 71–85.
Sebastopol, siege, 105; not properly invested, 112; siege at a standstill, 118; begins again, 133; taken, 151.
Service portrait of Sir F. Stephenson, 28, 37.
Seymour, Sir M., sends *Inflexible*, 175; dispute with Lord Elgin, 217; goes home, 239.
Sikh cavalry in China, 255.
Silistria, Russian repulse in, 84.
Simmons, Captain, 90.
Simpson, General, Commander-in-Chief in Crimea, 147; makes F. Stephenson Military Secretary, 147.
Singapore, 175, 177.
Smith, Albert, 230.
Smith, W. H., letter from, 17.
Soudan, future of, 309; origin of trouble, 313; failure in, 316; enemy's preparations, 341.
Sphinx, 292, 295.
St. Arnaud, General, 75; false move, 95.
St. Sophia, 78.
Stamboul, visit to, 76.
Stephenson, Charlie, 14.
Joseph, 1.
Sir B. C., 2–5; serves in Hanoverian army, 2; quarrel with George IV., 7; Master of King's Household, 2; last man in England to wear Hessian boots, 57.
Sir F. C. A., early life, 25–28; enters army, 28; Crimea, 29, 31; letters from Crimea, 65; journeys there, 66–71; first impressions of Turkey, 72; visits Stamboul, 77, 78; complains of the French, 84; complains of Commissariat, 87; meets Omar Pasha, 89; promotion, 91; battle of the Alma, 101, 104; Inkerman, 107; pleased with Lord Raglan's compliment, 109; before Sebastopol, 113; views on Sir R. England and the *Times*, 121; life at Balaclava, 123; complains of unreliable news, 125; size of guns, 118–132; views on marriage, 135, 137; disgust with Canrobert, 139; work in trenches, 143; army too small, 111, 146; appointed Military Secretary, 147; illness, 31, 148; returns to Crimea, 150; inside Sebastopol, 151; describes destruction of corn, 152; "Ben," 31; misses post of Military Secretary, 32, 150; China, 33; letters from China, 165; shipwreck, 33, 172; Banca Island, 174–179; Hong Kong, 180; decides to send troops to India, 183; life in Canton, 201; health, 213; encounter with Braves, 214; gazetted C.B., 221; severe strictures, 225; narrow escape, 228; desire for recall, 235, 246, 254; no pay for two years, 243; asks for books, 244; extra work, 257; sorrow at loss of friends, 245; theatricals and fans, 247; views on kidnapping, 251; D.A.G., 251; Taku forts, 258, 268; admiration of Sir Hope Grant, 264; at Pekin, 269; watches looting of Summer Palace, 272; attends funeral of Chinese victims, 275; goes home, 275; goes to Canada, 34; opinion of Americans, 35; his mother's death, 36; Colonel Dawkins, 37, 38; goes to Egypt, 38, 287; route to Khartoum, 39, 283, 324; battle of Giniss, 43, 285, 342; life in Cairo, 289; visits Pyramids, 292, 301; Sphinx, 295; troubles

over cholera, 298; anxiety as to future position, 303; vexed with Government, 305; Alexandria, 307; views on possible Protectorate, 309; opinion of Egyptian Ministry, 311; visit from General Gordon, 314; policy of the Soudan, 315; anxiety about Gordon, 316; dissatisfied with affairs, 320; preparations for inroads of Soudan tribes, 323; Lord Wolseley's appointment, 324; desires recall, 327; Nile expedition, 330; gives credit to Wolseley, 332; fall of Khartoum, 333; angry with Government again, 335, 336, 337; Wady Halfa, 340; mummies, 345; interest in statue of Rameses II., 351; Greek fête, 352; farewell dinners, 355, 357; revisits Egypt, 47; letter to the *Times*, 49; delight at Kitchener's success, 51; character and opinions, 55, 58; Constable of the Tower, 59; death and funeral, 59, 60.
Lady (wife of Sir B. C.), marriage, 5; death, 33, 36; Hampton Court, 83.
Lady (wife of Sir W. H.), illness and death, 21.
Mrs., marriage, 12; admirable head of house, 13; genius for entertaining, 14; *see* Lady S., wife of Sir W. H.
Susie, 205, 232.
Sir W. H., early life, 6; page to George IV., 7; private secretary to Sir Robert Peel, 8, 9; character, 10, 11; religious views, 12; marriage, 12; home life, 13, 14, 19, 20; retires from public life, 15; work with Chancellors of Exchequer, 18; death, 21, 25; comparison with his brother, 54, 57.
Stewart, Sir Herbert, Military Secretary to General Gordon, 314; wounded, 332; death, 334.
Strangford, Lady, 307.
Stratford, Earl of, despatches troops, 68; anxiety of, 69.
Straubenzee, General Sir C. Van, Chinese command, 189.
Suakin-Berber route, 39, 323, 329.

Taku forts, failure to take, 242; prepare to attack, 263; taken, 265; *see* Pei-ho.
Tchernaya, troops occupy the line of the, 141.
Tel-el-Kebir, 299.
Tiger, H.M.S., loss of, 79.
Traditions, strange, 296.
Transit, accident on starting, 165; wreck of the, 172–175.
Transports, loss of, 113.
Treasury, Sir W. H. Stephenson enters the, 8; principal clerk, 10; Minute, 15.
Treaty with Chinese, ups and downs of, 219, 231, 234; failure of, 243; signed, 273.
Troubridge, Sir Thomas, 85.

Varna, letters from, 85; remains of siege, 1828, 86; fire at, 95.
Victoria, Queen, her "valuable servant," 12; appreciation of Sir F. Stephenson by, 356.
Vienna Conference, 129, 133, 134, 137.
Vincent, Sir Edgar, appointed financial adviser to Egyptian Government, 302, 312.

Wade, Mr., chief interpreter in China, 194.
Wady Halfa, review at, 47; Sir F. Stephenson goes to, 340; strongly defended, 349.
Walker, Colonel, 269.
Wall, Great, of China, 252.
Walls of Constantine, 83.
Wantage, Lady, letters to, x, 51, 60; visit to Egypt, 47; appreciation of Sir F. Stephenson, 53.
Lord, early friendship, 30; visits Egypt, 47; letter to the *Times*, 48.
Ward, Lord, 144.
West River expedition, 238.
Whitmore, Sir E., at Horse Guards, 327.
Wilson, Sir C. Rivers, 75.
Mrs. Melvil, 31.
Wolff, Sir H. D., 337; opinion of Muktar Pasha, 341.
Wolseley, Lord, 60; in the *Transit*, 163; appointed to relieve Khartoum, 284, 324.
Wood, Sir Evelyn, 304.
Wynyard, General, 148, 366.

Yalta, 130; beauty of, 145.
Yang-tze-Kiang, expedition up the, 275.
Yeh, Tartar General, 199; captured, 200.

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